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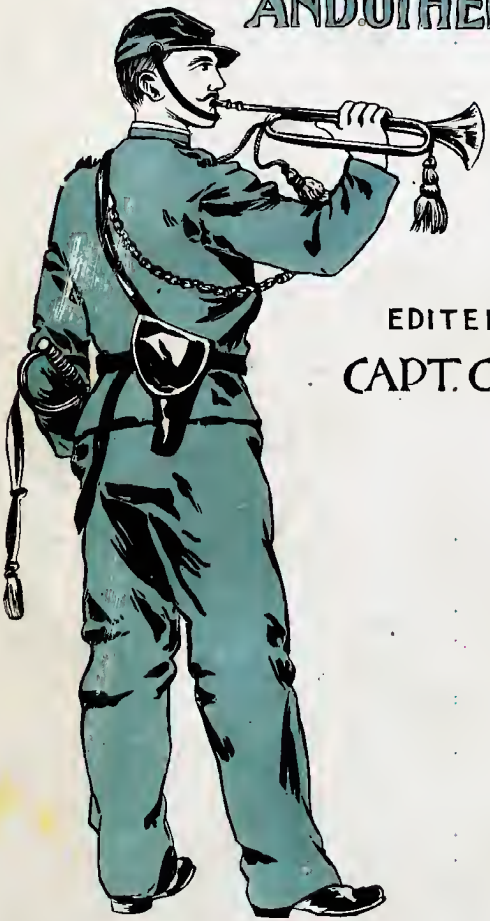
AN INITIAL EXPERIENCE

AND OTHER STORIES



EDITED BY

CAPT. CHARLES KING.

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CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

FIFTEEN years ago there were no soldier stories—so far as the regulars were concerned. War literature was abundant: hosts of tales, long and short, good, bad, and indifferent, had been told and were in active circulation regarding the volunteers and their stirring service during the four years' struggle; but of the life and doings of the soldier of the little standing army—either during the days of the Rebellion or the still more hazardous and trying times on the Indian frontier, the people knew next to nothing. Just why this should have been so, it is hard to say. With such rich mine of experiences to draw upon, with men to paint the scenes who had been both actor and artist in the field, there were still no pictures of our bluecoats on the border. Then, one by one the "professionals" began to take up the pen, and in the columns of military periodicals to tell of scenes and deeds whereof the public had never heard. Soon these began to find their way into framing of their own and be offered in open market, and lo! the reading public bid for more, and others came, and brush was added to pen, and artists like Remington and Zogbaum illumined the pages of the great weeklies and the magazines with vivid scenes from our life on the plains. And still old soldiers said that better

I was galloping through Georgetown with despatches for the general-in-chief; or when, resenting certain chaffing allusions by Baldy Smith's Vermonters, at Chain Bridge, to the diminutive size of the Wisconsin orderly, I said opprobrious things to one of their number, whose principles were as fixed as his bayonet, for, all unsuspected, he was a sentry regularly posted as such, and, very properly, wouldn't permit in his presence a violation of that particular one of the Army Regulations which provided that all sentries must be treated with respect by all parties whomsoever. He gave me the choice of swallowing my words or that bayonet, and one or the other it would have had to be but for the coming of an officer of the guard, who held that the sentry was the first offender. The Vermonters were armed with the Enfield rifle in those days, and I have hated the sight of the Enfield bayonet ever since.

These were the few disagreeable features of the duty. Its prides and pleasures were many. It was wonderful, it was thrilling, one lovely evening in the early autumn, to listen to the clicking of the telegraph instrument in the office of the assistant adjutant-general, to watch the eager light on the face of the operator, and the expectant look on those of the officers close at hand, and then to hear the low voice of the general as he read the pencilled despatch directing him to hold his brigade in readiness to march at a moment's notice—no one could say whither. Further telegraphing there was, to and fro, and intimation that there was no need of keeping the men in ranks, or even "sleeping on their arms." In those early days of the war many officials thought it necessary to warn commands to be ready at a moment's notice, when an hour's would have been amply sufficient. Perhaps it was necessary, but we Badgers were eager to move, and didn't think such precaution called for.

Tattoo sounded as usual. The staff-officers had personally notified the five regimental commanders, but pretty much everybody turned in for a night's rest, leaving camp to the care of the guards. The belief seemed to be general that marching orders would not come before reveille, if they did then. Even at head-quarters, at the old mansion aforementioned, the general and the staff turned in, leaving the operator to doze at his desk, held there by some mysteri-

ous "tip," and the orderly to toss and roll, wide-eyed, upon his blankets on the portico without. The long Venetian windows stood open to admit the fresh night air; the sentry paced to and fro in the starlit walk in front; beyond and beneath him stretched the dim night-lights of Washington, and not a sound but his crunching heel on the gravel broke the solemn stillness, until, all of a sudden, towards twelve o'clock, the instrument and the operator woke up together. As for the orderly, he hadn't been asleep at all.

I cannot now recall the precise words of that midnight order. It was brief and to the point, however. It directed the brigade to move at once to the support of General W. F. Smith's command then crossing the Chain Bridge up the Potomac, with the object of seizing the heights on the Virginia shore. It must be remembered that at this time the triumphant South had planted her banner on Munson's Hill in full view of the Capitol, and that Southern videttes and pickets lined the Potomac from a point easily in long cannon-shot of the spires of Georgetown. Smith's brigade, which comprised, among others, the Vermonters and the Sixth Maine, had been in camp on the plateau overlooking Chain Bridge from the Maryland shore, and, so we were afterwards told, had frequently suffered alarm and annoyance at the hands of the active foe on the opposite bank. The heights were bold, heavily wooded, and commanding. Smith's orders, I presume, were to cross at night, seize and fortify them. Ours were to follow and support.

I can remember the general's quiet order to his chief of staff, who came hurriedly in from an adjoining room, pencil in mouth, and both arms together working into his blue flannel sack coat. I remember that while there was nothing whatever in the order to say so, the impression I got was that all rebeldom was headed for the south end of that bridge, and all Wisconsin, Indiana, and Highlanders to boot, in King's Brigade were needed there to beat back the invader. Long before the staff-officers proper could mount and away on their mission, I had bolted out of the back door and through the rear court of the old southern homestead and down the steep slope into the dark depths of the ravine that interposed between head-quarters and the regimental camps, and then went panting up the opposite rise, to meet

the challenge of the first sentry,—a boy from my own town and school of years before; and so eager was he over the glorious news I was so unsoldierly as to tell him, as he recognized and let me pass, that he shouted after me through the chill starlight, "Say! for God's sake get me off post so't I can go too." I ran straight to the colonel's tent,—Cobb, of the Fifth Wisconsin,—and he was napping like a weasel, and out of his bunk before I was out of hearing. "Tell the drum-major to have the long roll sounded, will you?" said he as I sped away to rouse the next command. It couldn't have been two minutes before every drummer in the Fifth was battering away at his sheepskin, while I tore on through the camp of the Sixth and then up the Georgetown road to the more distant post of the Highlanders, the drums of the Second Wisconsin and the Nineteenth Indiana already swelling the chorus of their fellows in the Fifth. This was the accepted method of the first days of the war, and was considered very swell and soldierly then, though the system remained but a brief time unmodified. I had run nearly half a mile, and had enjoyed every inch of my way, and every atom of my vicarious importance before the first check came. This was at the guarded tent of the new colonel of the stalwart Seventy-ninth,—grim, gifted, old "Ike" Stevens, he who died so gloriously at Chantilly, with Phil Kearny, a year later. Stevens was new to the brigade, but old to the business. The Seventy-ninth had lost their colonel at Bull Run and their heads soon after, owing to some misunderstanding among the men as to the terms of their enlistment. There had been temporary deprivation of arms and colors, a court-martial of the ringleaders, a sharp admonition, and then, having learned a valuable lesson, the regiment was ready for serious work again, and an experienced soldier was put at their head by way of preventing their losing it next time; and this new colonel knew not the diminutive orderly palavering out there in the dark with a six-foot-two sentry in vain endeavor to persuade him to rouse his chief if the countersign wasn't sufficient to satisfy him the messenger came properly vouched for. What the colonel did know was that no small boy had any right raising such a big row about his tent, and he came out in deep exasperation—and night shirt,—and, despite the distant thunder of the drums in

the camps behind, he might have sent the orderly to learn his lesson at the guard tent, had not an aide trotted up at the instant with orders which called for more serious work. I had never met Colonel Stevens before ; I always managed to keep out of his way afterwards, fearful that he might remember me and resume the pointed remarks he was making when Lieutenant Benkard, late of the New York Seventh, rode in to claim his attention in the nick of time.

The Second and Fifth were already forming line as we returned, the aide gravely admonishing the orderly that it was a case of too much zeal and juvenile enthusiasm on the latter's part, but I doubt if he cared much. The youngster had enjoyed the unspeakable delight of rousing the brigade for its first night march.

And what a march it was ! In the dim starlight, through the winding, tree-fringed road, down into the gorge of Rock Creek, then up over the cobblestones through the quaint, old-fashioned streets of Georgetown, with night-capped heads popping from the windows on every side, and low, wondering, awe-stricken comments at the strength and numbers of the command. And then the general led us out upon the Aqueduct road, and there to our left, vague, shadowy, silent, flowed the Potomac, the mist already hovering over its fast-flitting wave. And all ahead was darkness, and all in rear solemn, disciplined silence. Even among those *nil admirari* scoffers of the Second—they who, having borne the heat and burden of Bull Run, looked down upon their newer comrades who hadn't—there was none of the ribald comment on matters and things in general, and other fellows' officers in particular, with which they punctuated so many of the periods of their subsequent history. Nobody except at head of column knew just where we were going, and the mile-long procession tramped steadily on through the night, nine men out of ten—to say nothing of the orderly boy—ready to bet on a battle at dawn.

We had accompaniments then that were either lost or consolidated in the more practical days that followed. Each regiment had a big band, and one of them a *vivandière*, a really gentle and lovable girl who had left her far western home to follow her father to the front and nurse and soothe

and cheer the sick and wounded. She was perfectly simple and earnest about it all. She had as much faith in her value and importance as I had in mine, and was as equally innocent of the idea that she could ever be very much in the way. She had two suits of uniform and two tents. She marched with the band when it "trooped" along the line at dress parade wearing all her jaunty finery, and sat at the hospital tents and read to the sick, especially one fine-looking, dark-bearded officer, in the more sober but no less effective every-day garb. She occupied one of her two tents, while her "maid," a brawny Irishwoman, occupied the other, and both were pitched under the wing of the surgeon's. And when we started on this march our *vivandière* wanted to go, but our orders were to leave camps, baggage, everything in fact, standing, and her place, said the doctor, was with the sick. Nevertheless, at one of the halts, while a staff-officer explored the dim lane ahead, not knowing which of two evil roads to choose, a rattle of wheels was heard over a stony stretch some distance back, and the titter went round in the ranks of the Second that the Fifth had "sent back for their nurse," which led to the remark on the part of a "B" Company corporal that he could lick the man in the Second who started that lie till six nurses couldn't help him. And then "Attention!" was passed down the column, and arms went up to right shoulder shift again and the fight was declared off until we had settled the business in hand. The orderly heard more or less of this working his way up to the front again after an errand that took him back to little Colonel O'Connor, the new soldier head of the ribald Second, who was to lead them into their next great fight on the historic field near the Warrenton Pike, and go down to his death with such appalling percentage of his famous battalion, the regiment that was to win the proud record of having faced the foe so stubbornly and so often as to stand foremost in the army of the United States—regular and volunteer infantry—in its roll of honor of officers and men killed or mortally wounded in battle.

Who could picture what was to come as we tramped sturdily on that long September night? Somewhere up the road, I remember, where all was pitchy darkness, there

came a sharp, excited challenge. A sentry belonging to a guard posted over some bridge or field work didn't propose to let that host run over him without knowing who they were, and the whole brigade had to halt until a staff-officer dismounted and went ahead and gave him the countersign, and explained all about it, perhaps; and then the general said a kindly word to the sentry, complimenting him on his knowledge of sentry duty; and the sentry, rejoicing, slapped his musket butt and grinned, and said he guessed the boys he trained with was *all* pretty much up to snuff. And this point being good-humoredly conceded, the column again trudged on. And then another "picket," about a hundred yards ahead, concluded he'd interview us too. And this sort of thing becoming monotonous, the general told old Colonel Cutler, commanding the Sixth Wisconsin, which led the brigade, to send a lieutenant with some men ahead as a sort of *avant courier*, and my veteran townsman, Herr Schumacher, a gallant German soldier and American citizen, pushed out with a half platoon, and did the interviewing,—first man of the Western brigade to reach the Vermont picket at the dim and ghostly bridge, and to lead us into its dark, cavernous mouth; one of the first of his gallant regiment to win promotion to a major's leaves, and fall, face to the foe, while they were still new and glistening.

Behind the statuesque Vermonters a group of anxious women were eagerly questioning. There had been firing across the stream when Smith's advance pushed through. "They say Jim Tennant's shot," was their cry. And, just as the foremost of our staff, following the beautiful gray mare that bore the general, rode out from beneath the wooden roof of the quaint old bridge, there came low summons from the front: "Open out! Let this party through," and a squad of soldiers, stretcher-bearing, swung silently by, a muffled form writhing in their midst. The Vermont general's guide was the first victim of the night advance. The orderly had across his shoulder a little "Volcanic" rifle, —the pigmy progenitor of the Winchester of to-day,—a thing that fired a bullet the size of a marrowfat from one end, and singed off your eyebrows at the other owing to some imperfection in the gas-check, a thing he lent to everybody who wanted to try it, secure in the conviction that he

wouldn't want it again. But after poor Tennant was borne by, and we pushed on up the rocky sides of Pimet Run, up the winding ascent to the heights where next day the lines of Forts Ethan Allen and Marcy were staked, the orderly thought he might really have to pull that trigger again.

Half an hour of stumbling and alternate challenge, halt, and push ahead, and at last we emerged from under the trees into the open starlight again, upon some high ground, where dim, shadowy horsemen were huddled, and long lines of infantry faded away into darkness at front and flank, and the general in support announced his presence to the general on the spot, and then it became a question what on earth to do with all these men. Far to the east the morning star was shining on the upper fringe of the russet dawn. We had come for all we were worth, expectant of a fight, but the Vermont general was saying to his Wisconsin comrade that there didn't seem to be enough for both to do, and certainly, by inference, no room for two. He would like to have the support of the new brigade provided places could be found for them to camp, and places, temporary at least, were found for all but the Sixth Wisconsin, which retraced its steps to the north shore again, and went into camp along what was known as the "Upper Road," some five hundred yards back from the river bank. And here, too, were pitched the tents of the general and staff. And here, for several days, we stayed with nothing beyond an occasional "affair of outposts" at the front to excite us, while the powers that were went on with the duty of fortifying those Virginia heights, and then of reinforcing the fortifiers, for more troops began coming, one of the first regiments to arrive being the so-called "California," which was recruited East, but credited to the Pacific slope, which was commanded by the President's old-time friend, Colonel (erstwhile Senator) E. D. Baker; and, by one of those strange freaks of military life, Colonel Baker was ordered to report with his command to Colonel I. I. Stevens, his long-time personal and political opponent, if not open enemy. Mr. Lincoln was quick to hear of and see this, and straightway settled things by promoting Stevens a brigadier and sending him elsewhere.

All the same, there was only one brigade organized at the

Virginia end of the bridge, and men enough were there for three. It was then that there came to us one whose name was soon on every tongue,—the soldier who was pronounced "superb to-day" at Gettysburg, and who rose to be a model corps commander in the Grand Army of the Union, and to die long years after the war, a "favorite" for the Presidency and the acknowledged head of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion.

And with his coming came one of the proudest days of the orderly's life. It had been storming hard; the mud was deep, the roads were mire, the skies were floods, and I was alone at head-quarters. Our general had gone in to Washington on duty, taking some of the staff with him. The others had gone to visit the camp of the Sixth Wisconsin, and down the "upper road" there presently appeared a long column of bedraggled blue infantry. Away from their front came galloping two horsemen, wrapped in rubber overcoats and dripping with rain, and these headed straight for our tents, whence even the sentry had been withdrawn. I had seen some of the famous men of the old Army,—Scott, Harney, Sidney Johnston, and C. F. Smith,—superb-looking soldiers when in their prime and long after, but the leader of these two was mate for the best of them. He rode admirably and with the seat even then I knew to be West Point, and he rode straight to our tent, and reined up as the youngster in Zouave rig rose and saluted him.

His first inquiry was for the general, and was told he was gone to Washington. "Any of the staff here?" was the next, and, in all the valorous importance of sixteen years and five feet nothing, the orderly answered, "Yes, sir,—I am;" and the handsome rider was too much of a gentleman to laugh, though his lips twitched under his brown moustache. "Well, I was told to apply here for a guide to General Smith's position across the river," said he, as though doubtful now of getting one, and he looked pleased when the youngster said, "All right, sir; I'll go with you at once," led out his own horse, mounted, and pointed to a pathway across the storm-swept plateau where the Sibley tents of the Sixth Maine were still standing. "If you'll turn the head of column off there, sir, we can save a mile.

The wagons'll have to follow round by the road," said he, and the tall officer sent an order accordingly. Presently he and his guide were riding side by side in the lead of the long, light-blue snake that came curving and crawling after them over the miry way,—two big, brand-new regiments of Pennsylvanians. Down the steep ramp at the brow of the bluff went the oddly matched pair, the few staff-officers following, the leading regiment close behind, and every now and then the tall general turned and took a curious look at the orderly, and presently began asking questions as to how he came to be in service at so early an age, where he was from, etc. One question led to another, the general finally flattering the boy with the statement that, in his opinion, he was cut out for a soldier and ought to go to West Point,—and that was and had been for years the dearest wish of the youngster's heart; he was even then importuning the great War President to promise him one of the next ten appointments "at large," and this the tall, handsome general said he was glad to hear. They had threaded their way through the Virginia woods by this time, and were close to General Smith's head-quarters, and there, before reporting his arrival, did the newcomer turn and offer his gauntleted hand to the little fellow, and thank him for the service rendered, and say, "Now, my lad, I shan't forget you or the talk we've had. Perhaps I can help you some day in getting what you want, and if I can you let me know. My name's Hancock."

And in less than two years after, the same tall soldier, a national hero by that time, famous for his services on every field where fought the Army of the Potomac, doubly famous for Gettysburg, from whose wounds he was just recuperating, rose stiffly and slowly from the sofa where he sat, surrounded by a throng of admiring men and women, in the parlor of Cozzens' Hotel, to welcome a small-sized cadet who, in the glory of his first pair of chevrons, had come somewhat timidly to pay his respects, and he took the youngster by the hand, and introduced him to the assembled party as "My young veteran,—my guide the first time I crossed the Potomac at the head of my brigade." And small wonder was it that the "young veteran" well-nigh worshipped Hancock from that time on.

IN THE "NEVER NEVER COUNTRY."*

A ROMANCE OF THE KIMBERLEY GOLD-FIELDS.

I.

THE blazing sun of the tropics pours down his fierce rays on the arid region that lies between the upper waters of the Fitzroy and Ord Rivers, in the Kimberley district of Northwestern Australia, and the barren, treeless waste quivers in a haze of furnace-like heat.

Strewn about the sandy plain are huge jagged-edged granitic boulders, remnants of a mighty mountain of stone riven into ten thousand fantastic fragments by some terrific convulsion of Nature in prehistoric times.

The monotonous sienna tint of the landscape fades into the shimmering purple of immeasurable distance, unrelieved by a vestige of vegetation, save where a few parched leaves still cling to the living limb of a solitary lightning-stricken

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* The "Never Never Country" is a bush term applied to all that practically unknown portion of Australia lying beyond the confines of the remotest settlements. It obtained its curious name from an old bush song, with the frequent and suggestive refrain,—

"If you once get there,
You'll never come back, never come back,"—

the truth of which has been but too often verified.

The "Never Never Country" has always been a land of promise to the venturous pioneer spirits of Australia, who still seek to find new El Dorados within its trackless solitudes, and the bones of many a fearless bushman lie bleaching on its desert wastes. In my early youth the whole of the northern portion of Australia west of the one hundred and forty-fifth meridian was known as the "Never Never Country" and was thought to be a hopeless desert. Now the foot-falls of the white man echo along the border of the Northern Territory from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the boundary of South Australia, and the "Never Never Country" will soon become nothing but a legend of the bush. It is at present limited to the unknown districts of Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

gum that rears its gaunt and withered arms to the sky, as if in supplication for deliverance from such a scene of hideous desolation.

The eye searches in vain for some sign of life; no living thing is to be seen; a tomb-like silence broods over the illimitable expanse. It is only when the sun goes down that Nature awakes from her noontide torpor; then the bush resounds with the varied noises of an exuberant life. In the pale glimmer of the moonlight the great jagged-edged boulders of the plain assume weird and ghostly gnome-like shapes seemingly instinct with life and motion; noxious creeping things crawl forth from noisome nooks; huge bats—noiseless winged phantoms of the night—flit to and fro in the spectral shadows of the rocks; mysterious sounds echo in the vast profound of the desert, and at times the long-drawn melancholy cry of some night-bird quavers down the passing breeze like the wail of a lost spirit condemned to haunt the frightful solitudes of the place.

Far away to the southward the dead level of the plain is broken by a range of lofty hills. To these we must journey to find the scene of our story.

Imagine a gigantic winding fissure some three miles in length by a furlong in width running through the heart of the mountains. One side of the cañon-like cleft is a sheer smooth wall of dark bluish-gray stone a thousand feet in height, washed at its base by a small creek of clear cold water, in whose limpid bosom the frowning face of the mighty precipice is mirrored.

The other side is but half the height of the first, and rises from the sandy bed in a succession of plateaus or terraces broken in continuity by enormous rents and chasms yawning darkly in the face of the rock, while at the sharp projecting corners, in the sinuosities of the gorge, great pinnacled points of craggy beetling cliffs and curiously smooth dome-shaped masses of rock, clothed in varying hues of sombre gray, are outlined in fantastic contour against the sky.

Throughout unnumbered ages this savage gorge had echoed only to the gibbering cachinnations of the laughing jackass as he flew from crag to crag in the rocky defile, but

now its hollow abysses resound with the hum of human voices, and the metallic clang of the pick, the rattle and click of the sifting-cradle and the washing-dish daily reverberate within its cavernous depths.

Two years ago five bold prospectors pushing southward from the gold-fields of the Kimberley, under the leadership of one Henry Harte, penetrated the frightful desert that guards the approach to the mountains from the north and discovered that the red sands of the gorge contained gold. They thought they were the first to search for the treasures hidden in these lonely mountains, until in a sheltered angle of the cañon they found a human skeleton. The body that once contained these whitening bones had long since crumbled into the primal dust; only the more durable portions of its clothing had survived the ravages of time. The fleshless tibiæ were still encased in a stout pair of miner's boots, and a cabbage-palm hat sat rakishly on the smooth and polished dome of the skull, giving to the grewsome thing an appearance that was hideously grotesque. Close by, half buried in the *débris*, lay a miner's pick, a tin quart pot, transformed into a sieve by numerous rust-worn holes, and other articles of a prospector's outfit. Near the skeleton's right hand a time-worn leathern pouch, such as miners usually carry on their belts, lay rotting in the sand, and from its bursting seams a golden stream of yellow dust had poured out upon the ground. For this yellow dust the unknown, whose bones lay bleaching in the glare of the blazing tropic days, had braved the dangers of the desert; to gather this shining heap of gold he had dwelt months in the silent heart of the mountains, and, having gathered it, had lain down to die in the dread solitudes of that stupendous chasm—alone. When this discovery of gold first became known many adventurous spirits from the Kimberley crossed the burning northern plains and pitched their tents in the great winding gorge of the mountains. A year went by and the yield of gold not only surpassed the expectations of the most sanguine among them, but satisfied even those gray and grizzled individuals who remembered the golden days of Gympie* and the Palmer,* and, in their

* Rich gold-fields of Queensland.

boasts of a time when nuggets were as plentiful as stones in the creeks, were wont to disparage all subsequent discoveries.

At the end of another year a thousand eager treasure-seekers were washing the golden sands of the gorge. Their numbers daily increased, for the way to the camp no longer lay across the forbidding northern desert.

On the other side of the mountains the country to the westward, watered by the tributaries of the Fitzroy, was found to be of a more inviting nature, and through it communication had been opened up with the western coast, some two hundred and fifty miles away. A coach ran monthly between a newly-established port and a point one hundred and fifty miles distant from the camp, and teams of pack-mules might occasionally be seen winding along the sinuous course of the Fitzroy, laden with supplies for the field.

Midway between the mountains and the coast a small stream meandered through the plain on its way to the river. This stream an American miner, with reminiscent patriotism, had sought to call Hail Columbia Springs, but among the prosaic Australians, on whom this poetic flight of transatlantic fancy was lost, it was more generally known as Damper Creek.

One Silas Barham, a squatter from the Murchison, had bought a block of grass country on the westward side of Damper Creek, and from his station supplies of beef were drawn for the camp in the mountains.

In the early days of the "rush" the gorge was known as Skeleton Gulch, a name suggested by one of the incidents connected with its discovery. For this name that of Dirty Mary's Gully had been substituted,—no one knew exactly when or by whom, for men were too busy in those days staking out claims and washing rich patches of "dirt" to take heed of such minor occurrences as a change in the name of the camp. But when the first feverish excitement had subsided they began to ask each other who Dirty Mary was, but no one seemed to know. Surmises as to her identity were frequent, but unsatisfactory, for in spite of much conjecture and inquiry on the part of divers individuals curious to learn how an uncleanly female of the name of

Mary came to be associated with the gully in a proprietary sense, her personality remained shrouded in impenetrable mystery.

A facetious miner once stated his belief that her name must have been Harris, and while the allusion was lost on most of the inhabitants of the Gully, not a few of them unconsciously gave additional point to the witticism by freely expressing their doubt of her personal entity in the emphatic words of the fiery Betsy Prig. Like that sceptical lady, "they didn't believe there never was no such a person.' But, notwithstanding this general conclusion, no one ventured to change the name of the camp, and as Dirty Mary's Gully it continued to be known.

The camp was divided into two parts, known as the upper and lower camp. The earlier arrivals had taken possession of such of the plateaus on the side of the terraced wall of the gorge as were accessible, and groups of tents were dotted here and there, at various altitudes, on the face of the rock. But the lower camp lay in the bed of the gorge. It consisted of a cluster of tents and "humpies"* pitched in a wide sweeping curve of the cañon,—a sort of huge natural amphitheatre,—and was flanked on either side by a vigorous growth of scrub that fringed the circular base of the cliff. Sloping gently downward from this belt of scrub to the creek at the foot of the opposite wall was a wide stretch of gravelly sand, and in this sand—the deposit of ages—the gold was found.

In no other spot in the world can such a heterogeneous assemblage of humanity be found as in a mining-camp. This was especially true of Dirty Mary's Gully, for representatives of almost every nationality, color, language, and creed under the sun had found their way thither, the only thing in common between them being the universal thirst for gold.

Tall, gaunt stockmen from the distant plains of New South Wales, sallow Victorians from the mining districts of Ballarat, bronzed Queenslanders from the Barcoo and the Warrego, and sturdy colonists from New Zealand's humid shores fraternized with their ruddier cousins from the three

* A humpy is a small hut built of sheets of bark.

kingdoms. Chattering Chinamen from Hong-Kong, and swarthy Malays from the Straits Settlements worked side by side with Portuguese half-breeds from Timor and dusky Hindoos from the jungles of Bengal. One caught the rich brogue of the Emerald Isle mingling with the jargon of Cathay, and the accent of London and the dialect of old Scotia were heard amid the gabble of Malaysia. Uncouth bushmen from the back blocks, who could neither read nor write, conversed affably with men of university education; liberty, equality, and fraternity reigned supreme; there were no social distinctions, no caste; mere intellectual superiority counted for nothing, and a man's only claim to consideration was based upon the value of his claim.

And what strange stories of vicissitude, could they be but known, were the lives of many of the characters in that motley throng! There was old Dan Creel,—usually known as "the Professor,"—a man of some fifty years of age, whose wrinkled face and thin gray locks gave him an appearance of much greater age,—a tall, spare man with smooth-shaven, hollow cheeks, sharp, hooked nose, and pale, emotionless countenance, lighted by two dull, deep-set eyes that gave no token of the prodigious learning they had gleaned in God knows how many years of patient study, for "the Professor," albeit but a humble miner, was a profound scholar. The languages of Horace and Euripides were to him as his mother tongue; of Arabic, Hebrew, and Sanskrit he knew more than many a modern professor in the universities; he was familiar with the stately tongues of Cervantes and of Dante; he argued with Von Wedern the German and De Remy the Frenchman in their own vernacular, and talked with Naa Dee the Malay, Ganerjee Dass the Hindoo, and Ah Chin the Chinaman in the dialects of their respective countries. Indeed there hardly seemed to be a language he had not learned, or a branch of study upon which he had not pored.

What strange circumstances had driven this gifted and prematurely-aged man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow in the heart of that desolate waste? Whatever the secret it was well guarded: on the subject of his past history "the Professor" was as silent as the grave.

There was Von Wedern the German,—an exile from the Fatherland,—a stout, somewhat heavy-looking, good-natured, yellow-haired, blue-eyed young Teuton, whose appearance at once suggested the roystering student of Heidelberg or Bonn. His *forte* was music, and he played Beethoven's sublime sonatas, with the manner of a virtuoso, upon an old violin of exquisite *timbre* which he guarded as tenderly as though it were a thing of life and feeling. He was the chosen friend of "the Professor," and many evenings after the day's work was done the two might be seen outside their tent indulging in a friendly game of chess, of which noble pastime, as of everything else, "the Professor" was a master.

There was Lyndon the Englishman,—one of the five pioneers of the field, the younger son of an ancient and noble house,—a man of many accomplishments and remarkable personal beauty, who had flung away opportunities, talents, and money in the vortex of London dissipation, and now wooed the fickle goddess Fortune in these distant Australian wilds.

There was his friend Harte the Queenslander, a man of gigantic stature, keen of eye, fierce of aspect, and moustached like an Austrian Magyar,—a veritable child of nature, familiar with every sight and sound of the trackless bush, whose life was one continuous record of adventurous daring. Under his guidance the field had been discovered, and this circumstance, together with his well-known reputation, made him the most prominent man in the Gully. Between this fearless and untutored bushman and the accomplished Lyndon ties of the closest intimacy existed; they had been through many a perilous adventure together, and their friendship was as that of David and Jonathan.

There was Le Harne the doctor, a sad illustration of the moral ruin wrought by drink. He had graduated with highest honors in the medical schools of England, and no man came to the colonies to enter upon the duties of an honorable profession with brighter prospects than he. But the demon of drink had taken possession of him completely; he lived for nothing but brandy. At times he remained in a drunken stupor for days together, and in the intervals between these orgies he was generally in a maudlin

state of semi-intoxication. He, however, was universally liked by the rough miners, who appreciated his undoubted talent, for had he not cut off the gangrenous hand and so saved the life of Bristol Bill the packer? Had he not pulled many of them through stiff "bouts" of the fever and ague? Had he not, drunk or sober, satisfactorily officiated at several interesting events in the lower camp which resulted in an increase in the population of the Gully?

Moreover, excessive drinking was a virtue rather than a vice in the moral code of Dirty Mary's Gully, the capacity to dispose of unlimited quantities of "tanglefoot"—the generic term for drink of all kinds—being regarded as an enviable distinction. An omission to respond to a "shout" would have been looked upon as an insult to the community, for the *lex non scripta* of the Gully required a man to drink when invited whether he wanted to or not. It is but just to state, parenthetically, that there is no instance on record of any inhabitant of the Gully ever being called upon to resent an insult of this description. There were numbers of those curious types of humanity only to be found in the diggings whose lives are spent in wandering from field to field in pursuit of the phantom Fortune that but few, alas! overtake. Among these there was Twenty-Two-Year-Old-Scotty,—no one had ever known him by any other name,—whose chief claim to notoriety lay in the fact that at the age of twenty-two he had found a "claim" called the Golden Bar, out of which in one day he took four thousand pounds' worth of gold. Poor devil! his suddenly acquired wealth had only purchased him a brief debauch. He was now a grizzled veteran of fifty, but the name Twenty-Two-Year-Old-Scotty, given to him in commemoration of his youthful find, had clung to him through a life of varying luck in many widely distant fields. His chosen companion was an individual called Blue Peter, a weather-beaten bushman with a thick stubbly beard of such exuberant growth that nothing could be seen of his face save the nose and two keen blue eyes twinkling humorously beneath a pair of bristling eyebrows of the dimensions of ordinary moustachios. He had earned his strange sobriquet by the frequent use of adjectival phrases of singular

construction and of such extremely lurid significance that whenever he spoke the atmosphere in his vicinity was popularly supposed to become impregnated with a sulphury odor and to acquire a cerulean hue. Be that as it may, his conversation was so interlarded with startling profanity and curious expletives that it made amends in originality for what it lacked in elegance. These two men with Bristol Bill the packer were the other three pioneers of the field.

But perhaps the most interesting personage in the camp —at least to the male portion of the population—was Helen Compton, a young woman some twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, who presided at the bar of the "Golden Dawn" and ministered to the numerous wants of the thirsty patrons of that pretentious establishment. A woman of refined and cultured intelligence, of stately presence and regal beauty, she had nothing in common with the coarser female element of the Gully, whose morals—let us be euphemistic if we *must* be truthful—were not beyond reproach. Gifted with every charm of mind and person, it was evident that at some period in her life she had moved in polished circles, and one wondered how her lot came to be cast amid these rude surroundings and semi-savage associations. Her pale, clear-cut features wore a look of patient resignation, but at times when the statuesque face was in repose, a shadow of utter weariness, an expression of passionate yearning, came into her magnificent dark eyes, in the slumberous depths of which lurked the fire of a proud and passionate nature. She was idolized by the rough miners, to whom her beauty was a revelation; she was their ideal, their divinity, and in the evenings when the day's toil was done, the bar filled with bronzed and bearded men, clean and fresh from a vigorous application of soap and water, who sought with uncouth gallantries and all the curious arts of bush coxcombry to find favor in the sight of their stately Hebe.

But there was only one for whose coming she looked, —one whose handsome face, graceful bearing, and fascinating charm of manner had ever made him a favorite with women,—Lyndon the Englishman. He and his friend Harte spent their evenings in the "Golden Dawn," where

games of euchre, poker, loo, and such like amusements—often for very large stakes—were nightly in progress.

In the early days of their acquaintance, Lyndon was wont to stay for a few moments to chat with her, ere he and Harte left for their common quarters higher up the cliff. These nightly conversations imperceptibly lengthened, until at last Lyndon dropped out of the card-playing clique altogether, and spent the whole evening in Helen's society.

II.

THE "Golden Dawn" was quite a *chef d'œuvre* of bush architecture. Built of roughly-planed boards, with a high-pitched overhanging roof of red bark, and picturesquely placed on a jutting plateau of rock in the sloping face of the cliff, it made a most imposing appearance among the scattered tents and "humpies" in the upper camp. Van Steen, the proprietor, a wheezy little Dutchman, kept a supply of miscellaneous goods in a large room at one end, which he called "the store." At the other end, divided from the store by a number of living-rooms, was the bar, which was supposed to be under the immediate supervision of Mrs. Van Steen ; but as that good lady was fat and lazy, and spent the greater portion of her time in bed, Helen had practically sole charge of it. In her hands it had been made to assume quite a cheerful and inviting aspect. The floor was always kept freshly sanded ; the tables, if rough, were always clean, and the bark partitions were adorned by several neatly-framed drawings and sepia sketches of bush life, the work of Lyndon's facile pen. There was an air of rude comfort about it which the rough miners, accustomed only to the asperities of bush existence, gratefully appreciated. Moreover, it seemed to them that "shandy-gaffs" and "rum punches" acquired a subtler flavor when mixed by the deft fingers of the stately Helen than those dispensed in the reeking bar of the "Welcome Nugget," the rival hotel in the lower camp, where uncleanliness, to say nothing of ungodliness, reigned supreme. The "Wel-

come Nugget" was the resort of the worst element of the Gully, both male and female, and its interior was nightly the scene of Bacchanalian orgies that rang out upon the still air in echoing bursts of revelry hideously discordant. This vile place was owned by a repulsive-looking ruffian named Ricardo, whom the miners with satiric irony had dubbed "Pretty Dick." He was a half-breed from the Philippines,—a powerful, well-knit, muscular fellow, lithe and active as a panther, but hideous in the extreme as to his facial aspect.

He had suffered severely from "sandy blight"* in the Gulf Country, and the lower lids of his glazed and bloodshot eyes hung down upon his cheeks in pendulous folds,—red, inflamed, and rheumy. His countenance, frightfully pitted with small-pox, was further disfigured by a huge cicatrix extending from scalp to chin. This dreadful wound, in healing, had drawn the angle of his mouth up into the centre of his cheek, imparting to his face a perpetual leer,—a fixed and ghastly grin that was absolutely diabolical in its expression.

This ruffian's moral nature was in fitting conformity with his repulsive exterior. He possessed to a marked degree all the cowardly, crafty, and vindictive qualities that distinguish his mongrel race. Moreover, rumor connected his name with many an inhuman crime, a circumstance which appeared to enhance his reputation in the eyes of the rowdy element that frequented his resort. And this distorted image of humanity had, in common with the rest of the camp, fallen beneath the spell of Helen Compton's beauty. Her calm, stately presence stirred his black soul to its deepest depths and fired his gross and sensual nature with an all-consuming passion. Night after night he turned the care of the "Welcome Nugget" over to Stumpy Tom, his partner, and sought the bar of the "Golden Dawn," where he would sit for hours with his bloodshot eyes fixed upon Helen's every movement, grinding his yellow teeth in silent rage and jealousy at every smile she bestowed upon the handsome Englishman.

Helen soon saw that she was the object of this man's

* An affection of the eyes common on the sandy plains of Australia.

regard, and the discovery filled her with an indescribable sense of loathing and disgust.

One evening he entered the bar at an early hour, and Helen was seated there alone. He had been drinking slightly, and this stimulus emboldened him to take advantage of the opportunity to urge his foul suit. His beady eyes glittered, and his whole frame shook with ill-suppressed excitement, as he offered her all his wealth. He knew that was the only argument in his favor, and he dwelt upon it.

He was rich, and had shares in many of the best claims in the Gully. His men had struck a vein of quartz in his new claim, the Morning Star, which promised to yield thousands. She should have all,—claims, shares, money, everything. She should live in Melbourne or Sydney like a princess, if she would only be his wife. Helen was startled at the man's intense earnestness. She heard him throughout with paling cheek, and then told him plainly and calmly that she could not be his wife. This refusal only added fuel to his unreasoning passion. Intoxicated with her beauty and robbed of discretion by the drink he had taken, he seized her by the wrist and waist and, regardless of rapidly-approaching footsteps, bent down and would have pressed his loathsome lips to hers, when two tall figures—Harte and Lyndon—loomed in the door-way, and in another instant the ruffian was stricken to the earth by the Englishman's stout arm.

From that day forth the half-breed came to the bar of the "Golden Dawn" no more, a wholesome piece of discretion on his part, in view of Harte's threat to shoot him on sight if he ever ventured within pistol-shot of the place again. But in his heart he vowed to be revenged for the blow he had received, and whenever he passed Lyndon his eyes gleamed with an expression of concentrated hate that boded ill for the handsome miner, who returned the vengeful glance with a contemptuous smile.

Now, old Van Steen, the Dutchman, owned shares in several good claims, and as the store occupied most of his attention during the day, he took Blue Peter—who had shares in the same claims—into partnership, to look after the mining interests. Blue Peter, having been duly installed as a member of the firm, at once assumed a fatherly interest

in Helen, for whom he had always entertained a most respectful admiration.

"It ain't right," he remarked to old Van Steen, with much profane emphasis, "it ain't right to keep that poor gal hard at it all the —— day and then expect her to wait on us —— fellers all the —— —— night. So if so be, partner, as you ain't got no objections, I'll take her place o' nights once in a while behind the bar and give her a breathin' spell." Old Van Steen offering no objection, it was agreed that Blue Peter should take Helen's place every other night. There was a prevailing impression that Blue Peter's solicitude on Helen's behalf was not wholly disinterested, for it was observed that upon taking charge of the bar he immediately appropriated to his own use a bottle of exceedingly fiery whiskey, from which he imbibed copious draughts at frequent intervals with an air of such deep abstraction that he quite forgot to debit the cost to his personal account on the slate at the back of the door, whereon he kept a hieroglyphic record of the bibulous propensities of such of his patrons as obtained their liquor on credit.

The arrangement with Blue Peter enabled Helen to spend many delightful evenings in Lyndon's company. Her life in this remote mining-camp was a peculiarly solitary one.

The otiose Mrs. Van Steen was the only one of her own sex with whom she could associate, for although there were a number of women in the lower camp who, as a sort of placebo to public sentiment, were spoken of as the wives of the men with whom they lived, their matrimonial ties were apparently of a very temporary nature, as it was no unusual thing—though at times somewhat confusing to the "new chum"* unacquainted with the prevailing laxity of morals in Dirty Mary's Gully—to find a female known as "Mrs." This on Monday figuring as "Mrs." That on the following Saturday. It was therefore but natural that, amid these rude surroundings, Helen should yearn for congenial companionship. From the first she had felt drawn towards Lyndon, whose manner and bearing had at once stamped him as superior to the uncouth bushmen with whom she

* The term "new chum" is synonymous with the expression "tenderfoot" in the Western States.

was daily brought in contact. It is true "the Professor," Von Wedern the German, and De Remy the Frenchman were men of undoubted breeding and education ; but beyond a passing compliment when they took a drink, they said but little to her ; all their spare moments were given up to the fascinations of euchre and loo. But Lyndon had always had a weakness for the society of women, since the palmy days of his existence in London drawing-rooms, when he had been the *bête noire* of numberless fond mammas whose marriageable daughters, notwithstanding a judicious training in worldly principles, somehow would persist in falling hopelessly in love with the accomplished, but spendthrift, younger son. He was powerfully attracted by the grace and beauty of this singular woman,—more, perhaps, than he cared to admit. There was an indefinable air of pathos in her every look and action, apart from the element of mystery surrounding the presence in a mining-camp of a woman of her gentle nurture and cultivated mind, that deepened the interest he took in her, and he welcomed the respite from interminable discussions of values of claims and newly-found nuggets—the universal topic of conversation in the Gully—which these pleasant evenings in her society afforded him. And this interest would doubtless have developed into a deeper attachment had it not been for the memory of fair Edith Barham, to whom he had given his heart two years before, when he and his friend Harte were staying at Wollattara Station, on the Murchison. He was only waiting until he had "made his pile,"—to use a colloquialism of the Gully,—to go and claim her from her worldly old father, who had bluntly intimated that he would rather see his daughter marry for cash than sentiment.

Helen had early discovered that the handsome miner was growing very dear to her. But, inconsistent as it may seem, with the dawning of this her first love arose the hope that it might not be returned ; for deep within her breast there rankled the memory of a shameful wrong that had darkened and embittered her life, and though morally she felt herself to be guiltless, she knew that in such cases as hers the thumbs of a merciless world are always turned downward in relentless condemnation. She did not seek

to find solace in the thought that, here in the heart of the mountains, her past history was known only to herself. Indeed, in view of the courteous deference and respect paid her on every hand, that very circumstance made her feel that she was living a life of false pretence.

In the calm, still evenings she frequently walked with Lyndon as far as the spot where the path to the lower camp branched off from the road that ran along the side of the cañon. In all her walks and talks with him she had never referred in any way to her past life, though he had told her almost everything he had to tell about himself. Sometimes she longed to tell him the sad secret of her life, and yet again she feared the revelation might make her an object of scorn and reproach in his eyes, for she knew instinctively that he had the fullest faith in her innocence and purity. And it thus happened that the story, always trembling on her lips, was continually deferred.

Now, Ricardo, in spite of Harte's threat, sometimes ventured into the neighborhood of the "Golden Dawn" by night, in order that he might feast his eyes with an occasional glimpse of Helen as she passed to and fro about the bar. He came to the upper camp one evening and placed himself, as usual, in a position whence he could see without being seen. Being unaware of the change in the arrangements at the "Golden Dawn," he was surprised to see Blue Peter officiating in the place of Helen. His mind was busy forming theories to account for the change, when he heard voices close at hand, and a few minutes later he saw Helen walking slowly down the rocky road accompanied by the man upon whom he had sworn to be revenged. Burning with jealous rage, he followed them at a distance, and when they halted at the edge of the terrace he drew near under cover of the rocks, and crouched down in the shadow of a small belt of myall some thirty yards away. His heart was filled with vengeful fury. Again and again he raised his pistol, but the fear that, instead of his hated rival, he might kill the woman for whom he would have given his soul, restrained him from pressing the trigger. Unconscious of his close proximity, Helen and Lyndon stood for some time listening to the concatenation of curious sounds arising from the nightly revel in the lower camp, and admiring the

weird effect of light and shadow in the sweeping curve of the gorge.

When at last Lyndon made a motion as if to continue the walk, Helen, who had been in a strangely silent mood all the evening, laid her hand on his arm and said,—

"Francis, I should like to tell you a story; it is rather a long one, but the night is young and we can sit down on this ledge of rock."

Lyndon, wondering somewhat at the sudden tone of sadness in her voice, sat down beside her, and, after a short silence, during which she seemed to be struggling to suppress some rising emotion, Helen, in a low, steady voice, began her story.

III.

HELEN'S STORY.

"SOME years ago, when I was in England, I knew a young girl, the only daughter of a retired merchant of considerable fortune. She lost her mother when quite young, and at an early age was sent by her father to a fashionable seminary in Paris, where she received a finished education. At the age of nineteen she left school to assume control of her father's household, where for the next two years she lived a life of luxurious ease, surrounded by every comfort a refined and cultivated taste could suggest. From her mother this young lady, whom I will call Eleanor, inherited unusual personal beauty, and, as her father was known to be wealthy, suitors for her hand were not long in declaring themselves. But in those days Eleanor was of a proud and independent spirit, and, as her heart had not yet been touched, she dismissed all her admirers with very scant ceremony, though many of the offers she received were most eligible ones from a worldly point of view. After a while she noticed that these continued refusals caused her father a good deal of uneasiness. He seemed bent upon her marrying, and let no opportunity slip of impressing upon her the necessity of making what is termed a 'good match.' When she reflected that she was the only daughter of a

wealthy man, it seemed to her that he laid undue stress upon this point. But she did not know that her father was heavily involved; she did not know that disastrous speculations had swallowed up his fortune, and that for months past he had been upon the verge of bankruptcy, striving to recoup his losses by still more desperate ventures, or she would have realized that his seeming urgency was but a tender regard for her welfare,—that he might see her well provided for before the inevitable crash came. Her enlightenment came soon.

"One day her father was found dead in the library, an empty pistol by his side. When his affairs were wound up it was discovered that he had died hopelessly insolvent. The dear old home with all its luxurious appointments was sold to satisfy the creditors, and Eleanor found herself at twenty-one reduced from affluence to beggary, without a relative in the wide world, or indeed any one upon whom she had the slightest claim for assistance. A few of her late father's near acquaintances interested themselves on her behalf, and obtained for her a position as governess in the family of a Mr. Lothbury, a wealthy London stock-broker. The Lothburys lived about one hundred miles from London, in a great modern mansion called Lombard Place, where they maintained a large establishment on a scale of ostentatious grandeur that quite eclipsed the old country families in that neighborhood. In addition to Mr. and Mrs. Lothbury, the home circle contained two grown daughters—Julia and Ella—and four other children,—three girls and a boy, ranging from nine to fourteen years of age, who were placed in Eleanor's charge at a stipend of one hundred pounds a year.

"Accustomed all her life to the gratification of every whim and caprice, and to the tender solicitude of a fond and indulgent parent, Eleanor found the bread of dependence very bitter food. By Mr. Lothbury she was treated with affable condescension, as became a man of his extreme importance, by Mrs. Lothbury with haughty patronage, while the two grown daughters seemed to regard her with a combination of 'envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness.' The reason for this was not hard to find. Eleanor, as I have told you, was considered very beautiful.

She was an accomplished musician, an excellent linguist, and a brilliant conversationalist. When Lombard Place was full of company, as it generally was, she was frequently called upon to display her musical talent for the edification of the guests, and Mrs. Lothbury observed with virtuous indignation that on these occasions the gentlemen present seemed to take a greater interest in the penniless governess than in her own angular daughters, notwithstanding each of those unprepossessing young ladies had an undeniable attraction in the shape of a dowry of two hundred thousand pounds. It thus fell out that the drawing-room was tabooed to Eleanor, and instead of dining as heretofore in the great dining-room as one of the family, she was requested to take her meals in her own room.

"Her life was indeed a cheerless one. The children she was paid to teach were ignorant, wilful, and insubordinate, and lost no opportunity of insulting her by repeating in her presence the sarcastic remarks they heard their elder sisters make about the governess. Her proud, sensitive spirit writhed in anguish at the petty slights she was daily compelled to endure, and the galling sense of dependence made existence well-nigh unbearable. And so her life went on from day to day without a single word of sympathy to relieve its hopeless monotony.

"She had been about six months in Mrs. Lothbury's household when preparations were made for great Christmas festivities. Invitations were issued to hosts of friends and acquaintances of the family in the immediate neighborhood and in London. As Christmas drew near the house filled with guests, and one evening Eleanor was sitting in her room alone, thinking sorrowfully of the past, when a footman unexpectedly summoned her to the drawing-room to play one of Beethoven's sonatas, which no one there was able to do justice. Seated at the piano was a dark, handsome man with a *blasé* air, who, as she approached, vacated the seat and stood by to turn the music for her. As she rendered the divine inspiration of the great master she felt that this man's gaze was fixed upon her face, and, timidly venturing to glance upward after striking the last chord, she met his eyes gazing down into hers with a look of bold and undisguised admiration.

"A few minutes later, as she sat alone in a deep recess near the piano awaiting any further demands that might be made upon her services, she saw the dark gentleman walk up to Mrs. Lothbury, who was but a few feet away, and prefer some request, whereat that *grande dame* feigned a look of amused astonishment.

"'Impossible, my dear Sir Gilbert,' she heard Mrs. Lothbury say. 'She is the governess, and we only had her down to play those pieces for you.'

"'Yes, I am aware of that,' said the dark gentleman, with the faintest possible emphasis. 'But even so, I would venture to ask again for an introduction.' And Mrs. Lothbury, seeing that he would take no denial, led the way with very ill grace to the corner where Eleanor sat, and introduced her to Sir Gilbert Thornhaugh. For the remainder of the evening the baronet sat by her side, and Eleanor for the first time in many weary months enjoyed the novel sensation of being treated with courtesy and deference as an equal in a house where she had hitherto been compelled to submit to all the slights of dependence. Yet, in spite of her feeling of gratitude to the baronet, there was an indefinable something in his manner that repelled her.

"During the next few days, in her solitary walks about the grounds, she frequently met Sir Gilbert, who invariably stopped to chat a few moments with her. She could plainly see that he admired her, and one day as she sat thinking of this in the cheerless school-room after a more than usually trying day with her refractory pupils, a sudden hope dawned within her that his admiration might turn to love. What if he should ask her to be his wife! Such a thing might come to pass. She had read of such happenings in novels, and there are stranger things in real life than are found in fiction. Why should there not be a romance in her humdrum life? True, she did not, and felt that she could not, love this dark, sinister-looking man with the repellent smile. But what of that? Better life with a man she could not love than an endless round of drudgery; and she fostered this new-born hope until it became the day-star of her existence. Had she but known that while Sir Gilbert Thornhaugh dallied with her in the

garden he was on the eve of offering his hand and title to Miss Lothbury, with whose dowry he intended to pay off his large debts and the heavy mortgages on his landed property,—had she but known that he was a notorious profligate and libertine, a veritable wolf in sheep's clothing going about seeking whom he might devour, her life might not have been wrecked. But I am dwelling too long on this part of Eleanor's history, and I have yet much to tell. One dull winter afternoon she met Sir Gilbert in the garden, and, as usual, he stopped to talk to her. While they were conversing, Mrs. Lothbury, who had evidently observed them from the windows, came up and addressed some commonplace remark to Sir Gilbert, studiously ignoring the presence of the governess; but Eleanor could see that inwardly her employer was furious. Next day the children did not attend school, and during the morning hours their absence was explained by a note to the effect that 'Mrs. Lothbury, having no further need of Miss Galbraith's services, begged to inclose a check for a quarter's salary in lieu of the customary notice.'

"Later in the day Eleanor, having packed her scanty wardrobe, was sitting by the window in the waning light of the January afternoon. The snow was falling fast outside, and the trees in the garden looked white and ghostly in the deepening gloom. How typical the bleak outlook was of her own dreary prospects! she thought. To-morrow she would go forth into this cold world houseless and homeless, and as the full measure of her friendlessness came home to her she bowed her head to the cold sill and wept in her agony of heart. She had barely recovered from her storm of tears when the door of the school-room opened, and in the flickering firelight she could just distinguish the form of Sir Gilbert Thornhaugh coming towards her. She rose, and Sir Gilbert, bowing, said, 'Pardon this intrusion on your privacy, Miss Galbraith, but I only this moment heard that you were to leave us, and as I feel that I am, in a measure, the cause of your dismissal, I at once came to express my sorrow, and to ask whether I could be of assistance to you in any way.' He spoke so gently, and there was such a ring of kindly sympathy in his low voice, that her heart was touched, and the ready tears sprang to her eyes again.

She was about to thank him, brokenly, when he took her hand and whispered,—

"'Eleanor, I know you are friendless and alone, let me be your protector, let me shield you from the storms and conflicts of life.' And Eleanor, trusting in his honor, could only place her hands upon his shoulder and sob as though her heart would break. He placed his arm about her until the paroxysm died away, and then said, 'You are to leave on Saturday, I am told; to-day is Thursday. I have to go to London on an important matter within an hour, and will meet you at the terminus there on Saturday evening. Till then good-by, dearest.' He bent and kissed her, and in another moment she was again alone.

"This unlooked-for termination to all her troubles raised Eleanor's spirits wonderfully, and she stepped into the brougham on her drive to Leicester *en route* for London with a lighter heart than she had known for months. The frosty weather that had prevailed for some weeks past gave place on the morning of her departure to a decided thaw, and Leicester Station was enveloped in a heavy mantle of fog as she took her seat in the 3 P.M. express for St. Pancras. Owing to the thick weather frequent stoppages were made on the journey, and the express was three hours overdue when it reached the terminus. The people on the platform looked like ghosts in the fog, and Eleanor feared she would miss her lover in the Cimmerian gloom. But he was patiently awaiting her near the main entrance, in front of which stood his well-appointed private cab, and it was with a feeling of security for the future, if not of happiness, that she took her seat by his side. She had never been in London before, and every one of the maze of streets through which they drove looked alike to her in the fog. In about twenty minutes the cab drew up at a brilliantly-lighted place, which Sir Gilbert told her was the Hotel Continental, and where he said they would have some supper. Eleanor, not having eaten anything since noon, was nothing loath to fall in with this suggestion, and Sir Gilbert led the way to a private apartment, where a most sumptuous repast was speedily provided. During the supper, Eleanor, seeing that Sir Gilbert said nothing on the subject, timidly ventured to ask what arrangements he had made for their

marriage. She fancied that a gleam of amusement came into his eyes at this question, but it was a mere shadow, and his voice was very tender as he told her that he had intended to apply for the license on Monday morning. After supper they lingered awhile over a bottle of sparkling champagne, and Eleanor's former bright spirits revived under the influence of the generous vintage. But the evening drew on apace, and at last Sir Gilbert rose and touched the bell. Having paid the bill, he gently adjusted her cloak, and led her down to the entrance, where, during supper, his cab remained waiting. He handed her in; she heard him say 'St. John's Wood' to the driver, and then he got in himself. Eleanor had such a firm faith in his honor that she experienced no feeling of misgiving, and even had she entertained any doubts as to the propriety of her position, they would have been dispelled by the tender assurances of devotion which he poured into her ears as they drove on. At last the cab stopped, and Sir Gilbert, dismissing the man, led the way through a small iron gate and across a broad stretch of lawn until they came to the door of a house. A ring at the bell was answered by a page in livery, who took his master's hat and stick and vanished, and Sir Gilbert, removing Eleanor's cloak, said, 'Welcome to your future home, dearest.'

"The next day, Sunday, the weather being wet and gloomy, they remained in the house all day. Eleanor, whose powers of observation were of the keenest, noticed that while her lover's assurances were apparently as earnest and loving as before, there seemed to be a subtle change in his manner, now that she had spent a night beneath his roof, that she could not well define, and as evening again approached she began to feel a vague sense of uneasiness which even the thought that she was to be married on the morrow could not wholly allay.

"Monday morning came, and after breakfast Sir Gilbert's cab dashed up to the door and he drove off, ostensibly to procure the license for their marriage. As hour after hour passed and he did not return, she became alarmed. Her fears were in no wise diminished when she dwelt upon her position, and she began to regret the step she had taken. It was quite dark when she heard the welcome sound of the

cab wheels ringing on the gravel drive. Her heart fell at the sight of Sir Gilbert. He had left her in his ordinary attire, he returned in evening dress, and though his gait and speech were steady, the unwonted brightness of his eyes and his flushed cheeks told her that he had been drinking. The subtle change in his manner that she had noticed in the morning was now more marked. He was no longer the low-voiced lover full of eloquent assurances of tender devotion, but a matter-of-fact individual who spoke with the air of one who feels that he is master of the situation.

"'Sorry I'm so late, my dear,' he said, coolly, by way of explanation of his absence, 'but it couldn't be helped. You see I met Legard Villiers and one or two other fellows at the club, and they would insist on my going down to Tattersall's to look at some horses. I dined and changed clothes at the club, and have only driven back to take you to the theatre. So run up-stairs and put on that dress you wore the night I saw you first; it suits you charmingly.'

"'But did you get the license?' said Eleanor, in a faltering voice, for a sickening dread was beginning to steal over her. She had staked everything upon this man's honor, and his levity aroused a horrible suspicion in her mind.

"'Oh, the license, yes,' drawled Sir Gilbert, in an indifferent tone. 'I found that under our infernal marriage laws it is necessary for one or both of the contracting parties to reside in a parish fifteen days before the ceremony can be legally performed, unless they care to go to the expense of a special license, in which case I am told they are required to furnish reasons for their desire to enter into conjugal felicity in such a deuce of a hurry to no less a personage than the Archbishop of Canterbury. But we can talk this over in the cab; so run off now, my dear, and dress. I will wait here for you, and pray do not look so confoundedly solemn; you cannot imagine how it spoils that lovely face of yours.'

"I cannot attempt to describe to you the state of poor Eleanor's mind during the next few days. Sir Gilbert's levity vanished with the fumes of the wine he had taken. His manner became again that of a tender and considerate lover, but he evaded all discussion of the marriage, turning the conversation into other channels with the remark that there

was no need to discuss that question until they had complied with the residential qualifications required by the law. Failing to arrive at any more satisfactory understanding, Eleanor, with her mind in a chaos of doubt and fear, decided not to leave the house until the expiration of the legal period.

"Sir Gilbert did not seem to mind this in the least, and he went out every day, returning, as a rule, just before dinner to spend the evening with her. During his absence Eleanor usually passed the time in reading, and one afternoon she was idly glancing through the items of metropolitan gossip in a well-known society journal, when her eye caught an announcement that almost stilled the beating of her heart. The paragraph appeared among many others of a similar character, and stated that a marriage had been arranged between 'Sir Gilbert Thornhaugh, Bart., of Darnforth Chase, Cumberland, and Curzon Street, Mayfair, and Julia, eldest daughter of Throgmorton Lothbury, Esq., of Lombard Place, Leicestershire, and Capel Court in the City.' She sat there like one in a dream, reading and rereading the words that proclaimed so tersely Sir Gilbert's villany, until its letters seemed to be imprinted on her brain in letters of fire. She saw everything clearly now. The generous sympathy, the offer of marriage, the eloquent vows, were all false, false as the wicked heart that had devised these infamous means to an infamous end. She had simply been his victim, his dupe, to be cast aside like a broken toy whenever his fancy wearied. How could he take advantage of her helplessness to do her this grievous wrong! In the bitterness of her mental anguish she cried aloud, but no tears came to the dry and haggard eyes to relieve the pent-up agony of her soul.

"The dull gray light of the winter's day was fast fading out of the leaden sky when Sir Gilbert returned from his drive. He entered flicking his polished boots with a thin riding-cane and whistling an operatic air. As he came up and laid his riding-cane upon the table she rose and stood before him with the paper in her hand. She held it out to him, pointing to the paragraph. 'Is this true, Gilbert?' she asked, in a voice that seemed unlike her own. He took the paper, and she could see his dark face flush to the temples

as he slowly read the item. And then he laughed a short, nervous little laugh, and asked her with studied irrelevancy if she would go with him to the theatre after dinner. 'This is no trifling matter, Sir Gilbert,' said Eleanor. 'You asked me in a moment of sore distress to be your wife, and I, homeless and utterly friendless as I was, gave myself to your keeping. I came to this house trusting in your sense of honor, and relying on your promise to consummate our marriage as speedily as possible. You have advanced various quibbles to delay the ceremony, and I had begun to doubt your honesty of purpose before I saw this paragraph. Why did you deceive me in this shameful way? Why did you ask me to be your wife? Why——'

"'Excuse me, my dear; I asked you nothing of the sort,' interrupted Sir Gilbert. 'I simply asked to be allowed to be your protector, and, I may add—that is to say, I thought that under the circumstances you fully understood me. And I really do not see,' he continued, in a cold matter-of-fact tone,—'I really do not see why you cannot accept the situation like a sensible woman. Here you are mistress of the house, with servants and every convenience, and can remain so as long as you choose. I am head over heels in debt, and am compelled to make this marriage to satisfy my creditors. Of course I love you, and all that sort of thing, and if I am to be tied for life to the angular Miss Lothbury, there is nothing to prevent my spending most of my time with you in this charmingly secluded neighborhood; so let us kiss and make friends.' Eleanor's proud spirit was stung to fury at his cool villany, and as he stepped towards her she took the riding-cane from the table and struck him with all her strength across the cheek,—a blow that marked his face from ear to chin with a thin purple weal. She hurried from the room to her own chamber, where she gathered together a few articles of clothing in a small valise, and then quietly left the house.

"You, Francis, who know the immensity of London, can perhaps imagine the poor girl's feelings as she stepped forth into its endless labyrinth of streets, homeless, friendless, and now without honor. Her first care was to find shelter for the night. To this end she bought a paper from a newsboy and read its columns beneath the light of a street-

lamp. She selected an advertisement at random, hailed a passing hansom, and was soon beneath a roof. I need not go into all the weary details of the next few weeks, how she answered innumerable advertisements in the hope of obtaining employment, only to find that the fact of her friendlessness was looked upon as being cause for suspicion rather than sympathy, and that no one would accept her services without recommendations, of which, of course, she had none. Her slender store of money was soon exhausted, and it was not long before she had to pawn her trinkets to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

"At last there came a day when she again found herself in the streets of London, this time absolutely penniless. She wandered aimlessly along through the crowded thoroughfares during that bleak March day, and evening found her cold and hungry on Westminster Bridge. She stood in one of the embrasures watching the river fast flowing seaward, its dark rippling bosom gleaming with the shattered shafts of light from a thousand lamps. In her brighter days she had sometimes read of wretched beings who had sought nepenthe in its cold embrace, and the thought of these at this time filled her mind with a nameless horror.

"She tore herself away from the hideous fascination of that dark swirling flood and mingled again with the great city's ceaseless tide of life until she came to Waterloo Place, where Vice nightly holds her shameless parade. She shuddered as she passed those crowds of painted, loud-voiced things that throng its pavements, and hurried on into the roar of Piccadilly, faint and weary with increasing hunger. At the door of St. James's Café two young men in evening dress stood talking. As she passed beneath the garish light of the entrance-lamps one of them turned and followed her, and in another moment he was walking by her side. What he said she did not know ; she was only conscious of clinging to him for support and telling him, in a voice that was weak and faint with hunger, that she had eaten nothing for three days. He took her arm and led her into Regent Street, and almost before she could collect her senses she was seated at a table in the Café Royal.

"It was not until the pangs of hunger were appeased

that the hideous thought occurred to her that her companion evidently took her for a *femme de pavé*. She glanced at him, and, seeing that he possessed an honest face and kindly eyes, she determined to tell him her pitiful story and trust to his magnanimity. He heard her throughout with manifest surprise and sympathy. He told her that he was a surgeon on the staff of the —— Hospital, and that he believed he could find her employment as a nurse. He gave her his card, and after delicately pressing upon her a sum of money to meet her immediate needs, he took his leave, telling her to call at the —— Hospital on the following afternoon. The young surgeon was as good as his word, and he obtained a subordinate position for her in his own hospital.

"In her new *rôle* Eleanor was brought face to face with human suffering in all its ghastly forms, and her own lot seemed comparatively cheerful by contrast with that of the helpless beings to whose wants she was called upon to minister. The life was monotonous, the surroundings depressing, but when she remembered her bitter experience in the streets of London, she was thankful even for such meagre comforts as were vouchsafed to her. She brought such an amount of intelligence and zeal to bear upon her new duties, and did the work intrusted to her with such assiduity and fidelity, that promotion, such as it was, came rapidly. At the end of six months she had almost become reconciled to her lot, when an event occurred that again changed the current of her life. This was the birth of her child, a nameless little waif that breathed but one short hour and died. Her sister nurses, severely superior in the dignity of virtue never assailed, jealous of her beauty, and envious of the marked courtesy with which she was always treated by the visiting surgeons, who had learned her story, raised their voices in general condemnation, and protested to the resident physician against the contamination of further association with her. At this juncture the young surgeon who had first assisted her, and who throughout had remained her friend, again came to her aid by obtaining for her a position as attendant to an invalid lady who was going out to Australia. Her mistress died shortly after her arrival in the colonies, and she was again thrown upon the tender

mercies of the world. She found employment as a barmaid with a hotel-keeper in Sydney. This man and his wife were very kind to her in their rude way, and when the Kimberley gold rush broke out and they went north she went with them, and—and that is all."

"Helen," said Lyndon, breaking the silence that ensued when she so abruptly ceased, "you have been speaking of yourself. Why did you tell me this sad story?"

"Because my life is empty and wretched," she answered. "We have been such friends, you and I, and I thought perhaps you might learn to—to care for me,—most men do," she added, with a wan little smile. "I told you because I wished you to know my past, that you might see how unworthy I am of any man's regard. I told you because I need your sympathy—because—because—oh, Francis, can you not see? Because I love you!"

Ere Lyndon could reply she rose and hurried up the narrow pathway that led to the "Golden Dawn." She did not see the crouching figure in the belt of myall as she passed, or the bright gleam of the moonlight on the pistol-barrel pointed at the figure of him she had left seated on the rock.

IV.

WHILE Helen was telling the sad episode in her life to Lyndon, the miners in the bar of the "Golden Dawn" were engaged in discussing the prospects of getting a pack-train through the one hundred and fifty miles of rugged mountain and burning sand intervening between the Gully and the packers' camp at Damper Creek before Christmas, which was now near at hand.

"If some one don't push through this week, we'll not get mooch of a Chreestmas dinner," said old Van Steen, whose rubicund visage was barely visible through the clouds of smoke arising from an enormous pipe.

"I rec'lect spendin' a pretty hard Chris'mas on Peak Downs," drawled Twenty-Two-Year-Old Scotty, as he patiently whittled a particularly hard fig of tobacco with a

particularly dull knife; "and if I don't disremember," he added, with a reflective air, "we didn't have nothing mor'n weevilly hardtack for nigh onto a month."

"That's nothin'," said Harte; "I spent Chris'mas one time in the 'Never Never,' up in the Northern Territory, and me and a black fellow lived for ten days on a handful of wild plums and a bandicoot."*

"Talkin' of Chris'mas dinners," said Blue Peter, with a prefatory oath, as he lounged over the bar, "I was on the Condamine, one time,—I disremember the date ezac'ly, but it was in Joshua Peter Bell's† time, anyway,—and me and a man named Tim Shea,—the —— —est homeliest son-of-a-gun that ever chawed damper,—in fact, the station hands used to say he was that —— —— ugly he would scare a blind cow. Well, as I was a-goin' to say, we had knocked up a big check together, and was comin' down to Brisbane to spend it. You never seen such a —— —— season as that was. It was the year of the big flood, and afore the rains come the weather was that unsettled it would ha' set a saint a-swearin'. One day it would be a hundred and ten in the shade, and the next it would be rainin' cats and dogs.

"Well, the rains come on long before we got down to the coast, and we had the all-firedest —— —— time you ever hearn tell of. Stations was scarce in them days, and we had to make our flour and tea pan out as best we could. Chris'mas Day come, and we was still on the Wallaby. It had been rainin' like —— all day, and we was that wet we looked like we might ha' camped in a creek, and, what was worse, our flour was, too. The horses had about give out, and we was thinkin' of makin' a wet camp for the night, when Tim Shea sez, sez he, 'Peter,' sez he, 'there used to be a —— —— man what kep' a store on the stock road by the name of Jake Miller, and if I ain't miscalkilatin',' sez he, 'it's about two mile this side of us.' Well, to come to the p'int, we struck across for the store, and sure enough we made it about an hour after dark, and of the all-fired consarns I ever seen called a store, that was the all-firedest.

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* A small burrowing animal.

† A well-known Queensland squatter of his day.

There was nothin' in it but two or three tins o' canned stuff, a box o' lamp-glasses, a bar or two o' soap, and sech like odds and —— ends. I hearn afterwards the store was on'y a blind, and that Jake was a-runnin' a whiskey-still about a mile or so down in the scrub, and used to do a roarin' trade with stockmen on the road. Well, we walks in, and mighty glad we was to get a dry roof over our heads. Jake was a-settin' one side a blazin' fire, and a big old cat sat op'site to him on the other.

"'Evenin', stranger,' sez I. 'Welcome,' sez he, movin' for us to draw near the fire and haulin' out a bench for us to set on. Then he lifts down two billys from a hook over the fireplace, and shoves a bottle over to us and motions us to help ourselves, which we did, and mighty —— —— quick, I can tell you. But we was feelin' more hungry than thirsty, and after talkin' permiscus-like for half an hour, I seen Jake was makin' no signs of gettin' supper, so I sez, 'Jake,' I sez, 'ain't there nothin' to eat,' I sez, 'in this yere —— —— humpy?'

"'Eat,' he sez; 'why,' sez he, 'I ain't,' he sez, 'had nothin' to eat,' he sez, 'for a week, barrin' a bottle of Crosse and Blackwell's pickles and a tame magpie; and,' he sez, 'I don't expect to get nothin' for another week, if the coach don't come by on Saturday, onless,' he sez, 'I tackle them there cans o' sweet stuff in the store, which they're not the most nourishin'est thing in the world,' he sez.

"'It's pretty tough,' I sez, 'to go without somethin' to eat, especially bein' as it's Chris'mas Day,' I sez.

"'Any way,' sez Tim Shea, 'we've got a morsel o' wet flour,' and he unrolls his swag, and sure enough it was wet, for there was a —— —— sight more water in the swag than flour.

"'You can't make no damper out o' that,' sez Jake.

"'Can't I?' sez Tim Shea. 'Why,' sez he, 'me and another feller on the Warrego one time made a damper out o' three wax candles and a hatful o' sawdust, and,' sez he, 'mighty good it was, too, barrin' it was that tough it was like bitin' a piece out o' the edge o' a billy-can.'

"'By thunder,' sez Jake, jumpin' up, 'I clean forgot; we can have a —— —— good meal, after all.' With that

he goes out into a room at the back, and the cat gets up with her tail in the air and walks out with him, rubbin' herself agen his leg as though she knowed there was somethin' to eat in there as well.

"'One o' you fellers go out into the store,' sings out Jake, 'and get a bottle o' dried sage and a bottle o' them pickled —— onions, and chop 'em up for dressin'.' We done as he said, and by and by he comes in with what looked like a small bandicoot, but it was skinned, and its legs and head was off, so we couldn't tell. 'We'll have some stewed rabbit for onct,' sez he.

"'Rabbit,' I sez. '*They* ain't across the border, sure-*lie*,' I sez, for the last I hearn tell o' them they was two hundred mile south of it.

"'We'll eat first and talk afterwards,' sez he, short-like, and he stuffs the rabbit with the chopped sage and onions, and skewers it up with a splinter o' wood, and shoves it in a big iron pot to boil, while Tim Shea spread out the wet flour in a pan in front o' the fire to dry.

"Well, I never tasted no better meal than that there —— —— rabbit. True, there wasn't much of it for three hungry —— like us, and there was soon nothin' left but the bones.

"'Where's the —— —— cat?' sez Tim Shea; 'she can eat the bones.'

"'She'll never eat no more bones,' sez Jake, in a sollum sort o' voice.

"'Why?' I sez.

"'Why,' he sez, sez he, speakin' slow-like and lookin' me straight in the eye, 'didn't you,' he sez, 'notice no kind of a pecooliar flaviour,' he sez, 'about that there —— rabbit?' And then we seen through it.

"'Well,' I sez, 'I've et many cur'ous things in my time, but,' I sez, 'I'm damned,' I sez, 'if ever I et a boiled cat stuffed with sage and —— onions for a Chris'mas dinner afore.'

"'As for me,' sez Tim Shea, pickin' his teeth with a fork sorrowful-like, seein' there was no more, 'I on'y wish that there —— cat had a litter o' kittens, so's we could make 'em up into a pie with the flour for breakfast.'"

Blue Peter paused at this point and took a deep gulp out

of the black bottle which he kept in a corner of the shelf for his own especial benefit, and then observing a somewhat incredulous smile on the faces of certain "new chums," whose experience of the exigencies of bush catering had yet to be learned, he was proceeding to assert the truth of his story with a lengthy string of highly original oaths, when a pistol-shot rang out upon the still night air. This circumstance in itself would have occasioned no surprise, as the interchange of bullets was a matter of frequent occurrence in the lower camp, to say nothing of the playful eccentricities of Bristol Bill the packer, who, in the absence of an extinguisher, was in the habit of placing his slush-lamp on a stump in front of his tent, and neatly snuffing it out with a revolver at twenty paces before retiring for the night. But the shot was followed in a few minutes by a shriek so wild and piercing that every one in front of the bar rushed out to see whence it came, and Blue Peter's profane asseverations of undeviating veracity were made to the empty air.

The scream had been heard in every tent in the upper camp, and as the men from the "Golden Dawn" poured out into the open air they met miners running from every point towards the spot whence the sound had appeared to come. A loud *coo-ee* some distance down the road announced a discovery, and the whole crowd of excited men ran in that direction.

Just beyond the clump of myall, and close by the spot where the path to the lower camp branched off from the road running along the wall of the gully, they found Lyndon bleeding profusely from a wound near the shoulder, and supported in the arms of Helen and Bristol Bill the packer. A hundred eager questions were asked, but Harte, stepping to the front, waved back the curious crowd. "Ask no questions now," he said. "Here, one of you chaps give me a hand. We'll carry him down to Bristol Bill's place; it's the nearest. And a pair of you run up to the doctor's tent. He was drunk three hours ago; if he ain't sober now, chuck a couple of buckets of water over him; but bring him along, anyhow." Harte's orders were obeyed with alacrity. When he and another miner prepared to lift Lyndon's limp and helpless form, Helen

pleaded with them that he might be taken to the hotel, where she could nurse him. "It won't do, miss," said Harte. "It's half a mile to the 'Dawn;' he might bleed to death while he was carrying there, for God knows how badly he's hurt. Bristol Bill's humpy is just behind that big rock ahead of us, and it ain't a hundred yards away." Helen admitted the force of Harte's reasoning, and Lyndon was carefully borne by the two stout miners to Bristol Bill's abode. They laid him tenderly on the rude bed, and Harte at once proceeded to cut away the clothing in the neighborhood of the wound. The ball had penetrated the right arm just above the flexure of the elbow, and, passing behind the biceps muscle, had emerged on the inner side of the arm. The sight of Lyndon's ghastly and clammy face made Helen sick with fear; but her knowledge of hospital practice here stood her in good stead. She knelt beside the bed and compressed the brachial artery pending the doctor's arrival, and her fears were in some measure allayed when she saw that the hemorrhage was at once reduced in volume.

After what seemed to her an interminable delay, Le Harne arrived. He had been found in his tent sleeping off the effects of a protracted debauch. But as soon as he had been made to understand the gravity of the case he had pulled himself together and hurried down to the wounded man. It was impossible to look at the doctor, as he stood beside the bed, without feeling impressed with his outward personality. His pale, sharply-chiselled face, albeit sadly marred by the ravages of dissipation, was the face of the student and scholar, and his fine eyes, though bloodshot from the effects of drink, were bright with the calm, steadfast look of one who feels that he has confidence in himself. "I have no doubt the brachial artery is injured," he said, when he had examined the wound; "and," he added to Helen, "he would certainly have bled to death before I got here had you not applied compression. I shall have to cut down to the artery and ligate it. I have performed the operation several times before; it is not difficult."

His calm tone raised the spirits of his hearers, who had the fullest faith in his surgical skill. That it was of a high

order he had amply proved by the successful treatment of several severe accidents that had happened in the camp. Even his instruments bore testimony to his talent. The superb set he owned was the gift of a grateful patient upon whom, when in England, he had performed an exceedingly dangerous operation, after other surgeons had declined to undertake the risk.

Bristol Bill's humpy, though roomier than the majority of habitations in the Gully, was by no means the place one would have chosen for the performance of a surgical operation. The space was limited, the light was bad. At the far end of the rude dwelling lay the wounded man supine, in the condition of profound prostration induced by excessive loss of blood. On one side knelt Helen, still compressing the brachial artery; on the other stood Harte, his stern face set and gloomy, watching Le Harne as he rapidly prepared the instruments and other accessories, while gathered around the door of the humpy were groups of miners anxiously awaiting the doctor's verdict. Everything being ready, Le Harne cut down through the tissues and laid bare the injured artery. He picked out the coagulum of blood and a few fragments of cloth from the wound, and skilfully passing two ligatures, one above and one below the aperture, in the arterial tunics, he secured the vessel in the wound, and then divided it between the ligatures.

"We have two things to fear now," he said, as he finished dressing the wound, "gangrene and secondary hemorrhage; but as the humerus is intact and there are no complications, I do not think we need anticipate the former. The chief danger we have to apprehend is secondary hemorrhage. But with careful nursing I think we shall be able to pull him through. If you will arrange the nursing," he continued to Harte, "I will go back and prepare some stimulants." And giving such general directions as he considered necessary, Le Harne took his leave.

"Now," said Harte, shutting the door and addressing Helen and Bristol Bill, "the first thing I want to know is, how did this affair happen?"

Helen told how she had been for a walk with Lyndon as far as the clump of myall, and how she had left him seated

on the rock. She stated that she had not got more than a hundred yards away when she heard the shot. The sound had appeared to come from the immediate neighborhood of the spot she had just left, but a sharp bend in the path hid the place from view. An uneasy feeling in her mind that something was wrong had prompted her to return, and she had found Lyndon bleeding and insensible at the foot of the rock on which she had left him a few moments before.

"I'd jest finished my pipe," said Bristol Bill, "and was comin' up to the 'Dawn' when I heerd a gun. Like the young lady here, I couldn't see nothin', the road bein' so powerful full o' turns. But as I got round the big rock yonder I seen her white dress as she come down the path from the 'Dawn,' and the next minute I heerd her skreek, and I knowed somethin' was wrong. I run up to her, and when I seen how things was I give the *coo-ee* that brought the chaps down. Mor'n that I know nothin' and see nothin'."

For a moment Harte was silent. Then turning to Bristol Bill, he said, "There's somethin' back o' this that we must find out. Just ask the boys outside to step up to the 'Dawn.' I'll join 'em in a minute, and at the meetin' we'll see what's to be done." To Helen he said, "Of course, I'm goin' to nurse him, miss: I'm his mate, as you know; but I want to step down to the lower camp for a bit, and I'd feel obliged if you'd sit by him till I get back."

"Willingly," replied Helen. "I intend to share the nursing with you, for he will need all the attention we can give him."

Harte shook her hand in silence and then stepped softly out on his way to the lower camp. Meanwhile, the miners of the upper camp accompanied Bristol Bill in a body to the "Golden Dawn," where during Harte's absence the event of the night became the subject of an animated conversation. Lyndon had been such a universal favorite in the camp that every man experienced a desire to avenge the outrage. The general consensus of opinion inclined to the belief that Ricardo was the assassin. His hatred of Lyndon had long been a matter of notoriety, and this fact alone was, in the minds of the excited miners, sufficient to condemn him without further proof. Such a unanimity of suspicion would, in many communities, have procured

Ricardo a long rope and a short shrift without any preliminaries whatever; but the Australian bushman, though in many respects a wild and lawless fellow, is at heart opposed to mob law, and the swift judicial methods of Judge Lynch are rarely resorted to even in the remotest settlements, in the absence of direct proof of guilt. Still, there were not a few at the meeting who maintained that the evidence was strong enough to warrant them in hanging Ricardo to the nearest tree, and Blue Peter intimated, with many wholly unnecessary expletives, that it would be well for the lower camp, on purificatory principles, to hang half a dozen more of the inhabitants along with him while they were about it. The discussion was at its height when Harte entered.

"Boys," he said, as he took his seat, "I asked you for to come up here to-night, so's we might talk over this affair and see what was to be done. If any of you has anythin' to say I'd like to hear it." Whereupon up rose an American miner,—a sallow, attenuated individual with a sepulchral voice, who represented the party advocating the immediate hanging of Ricardo.

"We all know that the young Britisher hadn't an enemy in the camp outside of Ricardo," he said. with peculiar intonation, "and some of us have heard Ricardo say down in the 'Nugget' that he would get square for that knock down he got some day. Maybe this ain't evidence, but I'd plank my bottom dollar on the notion that Ricardo done the shooting, and there's lots more of my way of thinking. I ain't got nothing to say agenst this country nor its ways. The country's used me well and I'm doing well in it. But its away behind America in some things. Why, Lord bless *me*, out in Arizona we'd have had that Ricardo comfortably hung half an hour ago, and I move we nominate a committee of four to go down and hang him right away."

"I second that there —— —— motion," said Blue Peter, with a tremendous oath, amid a chorus of "Bravo, Yank!"

"Boys," said Harte, rising, "you all know that Lyndon is my mate. Me and him has been through thick and thin together for four years now, and I'd sooner lose my right arm than see him die. You all know, too, that I don't, and never did, take no stock in that d——d Portuguee. If I knew for certain that he done the shootin', I'd kill him

in his tracks same as I would a prowlin' dingo. But I *ain't* certain. I've been down to the 'Nugget,' and Ricardo is in bed; I seen him there. He says he's got fever and ague, and Stumpy Tom he says his partner's never been outside the 'Nugget' since mornin'. Like the rest of you, I've a strong notion he's lyin'. But I will not act on a notion, and I'll tell you why. Once down to Victoria I was the cause of gettin' an innocent man twenty years. I swore to what I thought was right, but years afterwards I accidentally found out I was wrong. But it was too late then: the man had died in prison, and I ain't felt easy in my mind since. So I move we wait for a day or two till my partner gets his senses again. He may have seen somethin' before he was shot. Meantime, let us do what we can to find out more about the case."

Harte's motion was received with a hum of disapproval. Then "the Professor" arose. "Gentlemen," he said, in his calm, clear voice, "let me say a few words. Harte is right. In view of the wide-spread popularity of our injured friend, suspicion is not unnaturally directed to the only man who is known to have borne him any ill-will. But remember that mere suspicion unsupported by anything of a tangible nature is not evidence,—not even circumstantial evidence. I perhaps speak feelingly, for in years gone by I myself was the victim of a foul and unjust suspicion. But no matter. There is a great deal of mystery in this case, and an accused person is, I believe, always entitled to the benefit of the doubt. Do not let passion and prejudice rob you of your sense of justice. The spirit of the laws which govern the more settled districts in this great country should prevail even in this remote spot. In a few days representatives of those laws in the person of a resident magistrate and a posse of mounted police will arrive here. In the mean time Ricardo can be watched, and if at any time he should attempt to leave the Gully, or any evidence be forthcoming against him, he can be arrested to await his trial before a properly constituted legal tribunal. In seconding Harte's motion, let me beg of you not to proceed to any act of violence on mere suspicion."

Again a hum of disapproval arose, but such was the influence of the last two speakers in the camp that the course

they advocated was eventually adopted, much to the disgust of the individual known as Yank, who remarked to Blue Peter over a friendly "nobbler" of whiskey that it was a "tarnation swindle they hadn't hung that ugly son of a gun of a Portuguee at first and done all the talking afterwards."

During Harte's absence Helen busied herself in carrying out the doctor's instructions, and having made her patient as comfortable as the ascetic simplicity of Bristol Bill's domestic arrangements would admit, she shaded the light of the sputtering lamp from his face and sat down in the semi-darkness beside his bed.

The reaction from the shock of the wound was accompanied by pronounced feverish symptoms, and as the night wore on the sick man grew restless with the excitement of delirium. In his wanderings a woman's name was continually on his lips. Helen felt a momentary pang of jealousy at the discovery that in spite of their close friendship another woman had always been uppermost in his thoughts, but she dismissed it as unworthy of her.

"It is better so," she thought, sadly; "if he had cared for me my happiness would have been too great."

She took his burning hand between her cool palms, and with the name "Edith" still on his lips he sank into a troubled sleep. A few minutes later she heard Harte's footsteps returning from the "Golden Dawn," and she stole softly from the side of the sleeping man to meet him at the door.

"Now, miss," said Harte, "you'd better go back to the 'Dawn' and get some rest; it's nigh onto midnight now. I'll sit with him till daybreak, and if anythin' serious should turn up, I'll send the black boy Jim up for the doctor."

"Before I go I want you to tell me one thing, Harte," said Helen. "He was delirious all the evening until he fell asleep a few minutes ago, and all the time he called upon the name of Edith. Who is Edith?"

"Well, miss," replied Harte, "it's rather a long story, but I'll make it as short as I can for you. You see a couple o' years back me and Frank and another chum by the name o' Villiers took a mob o' cattle out to the Murchison. The squatter at Wollattara Station—Silas Barham, him as

owns the station on Damper Creek—asked us to stay a month or two at his house. He had a daughter Edith, one o' the bonniest girls I ever set eyes on. I noticed afore long that she was powerful gone on Frank,—he always was a takin' chap with women, was Frank,—and Frank, too, on her for that matter, and they used to spend hours playin' the piano and readin' together when me and the squatter was talkin' about sheep and cattle and such-like. By and by the squatter began to notice this too. Now, old Barham was one of the richest men in the colony. He had come out in the early days with nothing, and had made his pile, and if there was one thing he loved more than his daughter it was his money. When we was out ridin' together on the plains he often used to talk to me of his plans and schemes.

"Speakin' of his daughter one day, he said he calculated to take her down in a year or two to Melbourne, where she had been to school, and he reckoned what with her looks and his money she'd make a good match. He's a blunt, plain-speakin' chap, is Barham, and when he found out Frank and Edith was sweet on one another, he just called Frank aside and told him straight that he'd not allow no man to marry his daughter for her money. We was in the stock-yard at the time, and when old Barham spoke I seen the blood mount into Frank's face, and I guessed what the old man was driving at. The hint that he was after the girl for her money stung Frank like the lash of a stock-whip, for if there is a thing he don't care a curse about it's money. I expected some hot words from him, but instead he just turned to me and said, quite cool-like,—

"'Henry, my boy, just saddle up the horses, will you. This individual has been so accustomed to the society of people of his own sordid stamp that he is quite unable to distinguish a gentleman when he meets one.' And with that he turns his back on the squatter and walks away. Half an hour later we were on our way to the coast, without ever speakin' a word of farewell to Barham or Miss Edith. We had p'r'aps gone about four miles when I found I'd left my pipe behind, so Frank and Villiers just went slowly ahead while I loped back for the pipe. Miss

Edith seen me enter the stock-yard and she come out. 'Is it really true he is going away?' she said, and there was tears in her eyes as she spoke. 'Yes, miss,' says I, 'it's true enough.' 'Well,' says she, 'give him this,' and she gave me her handkerchief, 'and tell him I'll never—never forget him.'

"That's over two years ago now. We come up to the Kimberley from the South, and from there to this place. When the Gully got into full swing, old Barham, seeing a chance to make more money, come up from the Murchison and started a station on Damper Creek. Three months ago he went South to bring his daughter up to live with him, and Bill Stokes, who come through from the coast a week since, tells me she's there now. Frank heard this the other day, and that's what perhaps put her in his thoughts."

Harte ceased; then, in a firm and decided voice, Helen said,—

"Harte, he desires to see her, and he *shall* see her if I can accomplish it. I will go down to Damper Creek and tell her of his condition, and if she cares for him as you say, she will return with me and help us nurse him back to health and strength."

The bushman gazed curiously into the earnest face of this singular woman, who thus calmly proposed to undertake a journey across one hundred and fifty miles of desert to bring a rival to the bedside of the man she loved. His keen perception, trained in the hard school of the bush to a close observance of every individual with whom he came in contact, had long ago discerned her growing attachment for Lyndon, jealously as she had guarded the secret, and, though he could not fathom the motive of her present determination, his admiration for the self-abnegation it implied was not one whit the less.

"It's a stiff journey, miss,—one hundred and fifty miles, and the water-holes is empty," he said, hoping to dissuade her from what he considered a fool-hardy venture.

"Yes, yes; I know," she interrupted, with a slight gesture of impatience. "But think how pleased he will be to see her, and so unexpectedly too. If it were twice as far I would go. Give me the black boy Jim to look after the

horses and prepare the meals, and with a few directions from you I can make the journey."

Harte, seeing that opposition was useless, proceeded to explain the topography of the district. "The lay of the country ain't easy to get on to," he said. "These mountains here run this way." And he described a huge crescent on the ground, marking the salient points with a stick. "If we could make Damper Creek as the crow flies it wouldn't be much over fifty miles, but the other side of the gully is too steep to be crossed anywheres. If you could follow the bed of the creek you might p'r'aps find water, but ten miles from here the bed is too rough for anything but a pack-train, and you'd easy lose a day in time. So you'd better follow the track around this side o' the gully till you get behind the big rock away off there in the bend, where it crosses the ranges to the plains. Then you strike almost due north'ard across the desert until you get around the other end of the ranges where the creek loses itself in the plain. Passin' round the end o' the ranges, you strike due south one hundred miles,—but Jim, he knows the way; you trust to him, and you'll get through all right. I reckon you'll be wantin' to start about daybreak, so we'd better say good-night now. You'll need all the rest you can get, for it's a hard journey for a woman."

Helen shook the huge hand of the bushman, and, with a last peep at the recumbent form of Lyndon, took her way up the cliff.

Next morning she arose before sunrise, and, mounted on one of Bristol Bill's sturdy pack-horses, set out on her self-imposed journey, accompanied by the black boy Jim.

V.

IT is noon at Damper Creek Station. The sun beats down from the incandescent sky, and all

> "—— the landscape indistinctly glares
> Through a pale steam."

Silas Barham's homestead, half hidden by a grove of sandal-wood in a bend of the creek, is sheltered from the sultry

noontide glare. Its verandas are covered with trailing vines of the leafy passion plant, and beneath their grateful shade is a young girl half sitting, half reclining in a silken hammock. She is very beautiful, this daughter of the plains. Her fair face, framed in a nimbus of golden hair, is delicately lovely, and her eyes are of the deep azure tint of her native austral skies. With hands clasped behind her shapely head, she swings lazily to and fro, gazing listlessly out upon the plain.

As far as the eye can see the bush is burned brown and bare, for it is six months since rain fell, and the grass is all gone save in the vicinity of the creeks and water-holes, where the thirsty cattle lie all day. In the north the blue peak of an outspur of the ranges is faintly visible against the sky; in the south the smoke of a distant bush-fire hangs upon the horizon in a sullen cloud. There a "thin red line" of flame is marching ever onward through the parched forest,—destruction in its van, devastation in its train.

Among the stones of the creek the nimble lizard, in his gaudy garb of emerald and bronze, darts to and fro like a streak of living flame, and the iguana basking on the scorching rock utters a curious crooning cry of delight, for to them heat is life and fierce rays fire their torpid blood; but the whip-bird droops his tired wing upon the bough and sounds no more his metallic note; the sibilant monotone of the cicada is no longer heard; an oppressive silence reigns in the solitudes of the bush, and wearied Nature sleeps.

Suddenly the familiar landscape changes as if by enchantment. The arid expanse beyond the creek becomes a verdant plain, dotted with browsing herds. A limpid lake, with silvery waters rippling to the breath of gentle zephyrs, laps the green banks of dewy lawns, where splashing fountains play and sparkle in the sunlight and graceful palms bend their lofty heads to the breeze.

> "The misted purple of the mountain peak
> Looks far ethereal," *

and slowly melts into the distance.

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* "A Dream of Phidias," Rennel Rodd.

Like a vision from the "Arabian Nights" rise marble mosques and minarets, and the hundred spires and domes of an Oriental city. It is the mocking mirage of the desert, soon to vanish in a trembling haze, yet, while it lasts, clear and distinct with the delusive semblance of reality.

The young girl springs from the hammock, and, shading her eyes with her hands, gazes at the fairy picture in rapt delight.

"Mr. Dunn! oh, Mr. Dunn!" she calls to the foreman, who is enjoying a siesta in a cool corner at the far end of the porch, "come and look at this wonderful mirage!"

The sight of a mirage is no novelty to the old bushman, the greater part of whose life has been spent in the "Never Never Country," but to gratify his young mistress he comes forward from his shady nook to look at Nature's transformation scene.

"Is it not wonderful?" the young girl says. "Look how clearly defined those towers and palaces are! A Moslem city, too! Just such a one as I imagine Bagdad to have been in the golden prime of the good Haroun-al-Raschid. I almost fancy I can hear the voice of the muezzin from yonder lofty mosque calling the faithful to prayer! And see beneath that large stone archway two horsemen are riding. How strangely real it all seems!"

"I don't know nothing about no Bagdad nor no faithful, Miss Edith," says the old bushman, whose mind is absolutely impervious to poetic allusion; "but them horsemen *is* real; they don't belong to no mirredge, they don't. They're movin' this way, too; and when the mirredge is gone you'll see they'll be left on the plain."

Even as he speaks the outlines of the mirage become blurred and indistinct, and the phantom city vanishes as quickly as it appeared. The faint outline of the solitary peak again looms up above the northern horizon, but the two figures are still seen moving across the plain. The young girl runs into the house, and returning with a pair of small field-glasses, she quickly levels them at the distant objects.

"Why, one is a woman," she says, in astonishment, "and the other a black fellow. They are heading for the creek."

And in another half-hour two dust-begrimed travellers ride up to a large water-hole, where they and their jaded steeds halt to quench their thirst. Then, remounting, they cross the creek and make for the homestead. At the gate the horsewoman, throwing her bridle to the black fellow, again dismounts, and, walking up the pathway, ascends the steps of the veranda.

"Have I the good fortune to meet Miss Barham?" she says, in rich, clear tones.

"That is my name," answers the squatter's daughter.

"I have come from the Gully," continues the traveller, "to bring you news of one in whom, I am told, you take deep interest. I speak of Francis Lyndon. He lies wounded almost unto death at the Gully, and in his delirium he calls for you. His friend Harte told me you were here, and I came over to tell you of his condition, because I thought you might wish to see him before he dies, or to help me nurse him back to health should his life be spared. Will you ride back with me?"

At the mention of Lyndon's name Edith Barham's fair face crimsons with a tell-tale glow. Tender memories of a brief period of happiness in her life at Wollattara Station, when she first learned to love the handsome, careless Englishman, are awakened within her, and she feels that he is even dearer to her now than in those sunny days, two years ago, when they spent so many happy hours together by the reedy banks of the Murchison. Her father is away at the port awaiting the arrival by steamer of a mob of cattle for the station. She knows that he would never permit her to make the journey to Dirty Mary's Gully, but her sense of filial duty is overwhelmed in her reawakened love; and when she thinks of Lyndon lying wounded, perhaps dying, in the distant camp, a great yearning to be near him fills her breast. She turns to the messenger.

"Miss——?"

"Compton," says the other; "but call me Helen, please. We shall be very dear friends, I hope." And she frankly extends her hand, which is as frankly clasped.

"Helen," the squatter's daughter says, simply, "I will return with you."

It is sundown at Damper Creek Station. The shadows

lengthen on the plain, and the murky bosom of the distant smoke-cloud glows with the lurid light of the fire beneath. A heavy wraith of mist rises from the creek, where the lowing cattle stand knee-deep taking their evening draught. The bull-frogs croak in dismal chorus in the muddy margins of the water-holes, and the air is filled with the vibrant hum of a teeming insect-life.

From the gate of the homestead three figures ride forth. They are Edith Barham, Helen Compton, and the black boy Jim. They halt for a few minutes at the creek to give their horses a last drink, for the way before them is long. Across dreary solitudes of sand that echo only to the curlew's mournful wail, and stony, waterless wastes,

> "——that seem to upbraid
> The sun in heaven,"

it lies; and if their horses fail them, they are lost.

And so through the bare and melancholy landscapes of the "Never Never Country," where eternal silence dwells, they go until, at noon on the second day out from the station, they halt in the shadow of a giant rock at the end of the ranges in the recesses of which their destination lies.

To the right is the huge crescent of the mountain chain; before them extends the boulder-strewn desert mentioned in the opening pages of this story. It is only fifty miles to the camp now, but the horses are breaking down. The poor animals stand with heaving flanks and dilated nostrils. Their staring eyes are bloodshot, and they whinny hoarsely in the agonies of thirst. Since daybreak the heat has been intense. The breath of the desert is like the blast of a furnace; a purple haze of heat obscures the sky, and through it the noonday sun, shorn of his dazzling beams, shines with a sickly glare.

The younger woman gazes at the elder with a look of helpless interrogation.

"What are we to do?" she asks, in a weary tone.

"Push ahead as far as the horses can go, then leave them to their fate and walk," the other answers, tersely. "There is enough water for us in the canvas bottles, and,

if the worst comes to the worst, we can halt and send Jim ahead for aid."

And then the black boy speaks for the first time since leaving Dirty Mary's Gully.

"Missy no push 'head," he says, earnestly, in his Pigeon English. "Budgeree* place, this; all same long o' water-hole bym'by. Camp here. One—two hour big fellow rain come. Plenty wind; al'gether too much plenty wind. Yaraman† no die; him drink plenty bym'by. Jim all right; he know."

And with implicit trust in the unerring instinct of this dusky child of Nature, they hobble their tired horses and sit down in the shadow of the rock.

An hour passes. Fiercer grows the fervid heat, and Helen begins to doubt the wisdom of the course they have taken.

But at last, when hope is almost gone, a change takes place. Sudden gusts of wind arise and scurry over the plain, their erratic courses marked by little spiral columns of dust. In the north appears a small black cloud, no larger than that the servant of the prophet of old beheld from Carmel's hoary top. Rapidly it increases in size until it fills the whole horizon. Soon the sun is obscured, and the gloom of night succeeds the blinding glare of day. Pale lightnings shoot athwart the inky sky, and the responsive thunder echoes with reverberant roll in the hollow defiles of the mountains. Afar off an angry sea of clouds surges and seethes as though tossed in the conflict of mighty winds. A funnel-shaped mass descends in huge spirals from the lowering canopy, and is met in mid-air by a whirling cone of sand uprising from the earth; and then the brooding silence of the desert is broken by a strange, moaning sound, that rises in volume until it becomes a deafening shriek, and the Storm King, enthroned in the whirlwind, sweeps down upon the plain.

The travellers seek the lee of the giant rock, and fling themselves face downward on the earth until the violence of the storm abates. For nearly an hour it rages with cyclonic fury, then it ceases as suddenly as it began. The

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* Good. † Horse.

dense clouds of driving sand subside, and a welcome rain descends in torrents from the leaden sky.

Edith and the black boy Jim emerge from a sheltered angle of the rock, and shake the all-pervading sand from the folds of their clothing. Helen is nowhere to be seen. Edith, in a tremor of apprehension, loudly calls her by name, and a faint voice responds from the other side of the rock. There Helen is found half-buried in a sand-drift, from which she is extricated by the united efforts of Edith and the black boy Jim. The bodice of her riding-habit is torn to shreds, and she is bleeding from an ugly wound in her side.

"It is nothing," she says, with a half-smile at the look of deep concern on Edith's face. "I wanted to see the sand-spout, and foolishly ventured from the shelter of the rock to catch a glimpse of the phenomenon. The wind caught my habit and hurled me among those jagged points of rock. I thought at first my ribs were broken, but it is only a flesh wound."

It is, in truth, a serious injury, but she makes light of it to relieve her friend's evident anxiety.

They water the horses at a shallow depression the rain has filled. Here also Helen bathes her wound, and, tearing off the lower edge of an undergarment, instructs Edith how to apply a compress and bandage to stop further bleeding.

Then they remount and continue their journey. The sturdy little stock horses, reinvigorated by water and rest, gallantly respond to the spur. The loose, powdery sand, thoroughly soaked with rain, is now as hard and firm as the wet sea-beach at low tide, and no longer impedes their progress. Hours pass by, night falls, and still they push ahead. At nine o'clock they reach the mountains and begin their ascent. The crest is topped, and they pass into the sombre shadows of the cañon. When the great bend is reached they can see the lights of the upper camp, on the farther side, twinkling through the rain.

"We shall soon be there now," says Helen, encouragingly, to Edith, who is nearly dead with fatigue; and then, following the black boy Jim in single file, they descend the perilous winding path that leads down to Bristol

Bill's abode. But, to Helen's surprise, no welcoming beacon-light streams from its windows. She rides to the front of the "humpy." The door is unhinged and the place deserted.

"They have removed him for some reason," she says, excitedly. "We must go up to the 'Golden Dawn' to inquire."

A quick ear catches the clatter of their horses' hoofs ascending the steep pathway to the "Golden Dawn," and when they reach the hotel Harte's stalwart figure comes forward to greet them in the rain. Helen springs from the saddle unaided, and assists Edith, who is now completely exhausted, to alight. She leads the squatter's daughter to her own warm chamber and places her in charge of the motherly Mrs. Van Steen, who promptly puts the tired girl to bed. Helen herself experiences no sense of fatigue. On the other hand, though her wound is painful, she is conscious of a strange feeling of exaltation, her nerves are strung to the highest tension, and her pulses throb with feverish heat. Quickly she changes her wet, clinging garments for dry clothing, and, hastily knotting her dark, luxuriant tresses into a loose coil on the top of her head, she hurries to rejoin Harte at the door.

"How is he?" she asks, with eager solicitude.

"I've bad news for you, miss," says Harte, gloomily. "We moved him from Bristol Bill's up here half an hour or so back. You see, it's bin rainin' hard all the afternoon, and I'm afeard the creek'll be down afore long. Bristol Bill's humpy is only twenty feet above the bed o' the creek; this here place is a hundred and fifty, and out o' reach of any flood. So we took the door o' the humpy, and me and Sim Jenkins started to bring him up on it to my tent. But Sim, as was in front, he fell, and dropped his end. The jar started the wound bleedin' afresh. So, bein' as the doctor boards at the 'Dawn' now, we brought him here. Harne's fixed up the arm agen, but I'm afeard poor Frank's gone up."

"Let me see him," she says, quietly.

Harte leads the way into Le Harne's room. On the bed, at the farther side, lies Lyndon's still insensible form. His face wears the pallid hue of death, and only by the closest

observation is one certain that he yet breathes. Le Harne welcomes Helen with a bow of silent recognition. She walks to the couch and bends tenderly over the pale face of the man she loves.

"What are his chances?" she says, at length, to the doctor, in a strangely calm tone that contrasts oddly with her flushed face and nervous manner.

"He has but one chance, and that a slender one," replies the doctor. "He is in such a condition of anæmic debility that nothing, in my opinion, can save him but transfusion."

"What's that?" queries Harte.

"Some one must furnish blood to replenish his depleted system," answers the doctor.

Harte bares to the shoulder a mighty arm so knotted and corded with huge muscles that it looks like a gnarled limb of his native iron-bark.

"Take what you want from that," he says, grimly. "I reckon *I* can stand it."

"No! no!" says Helen, stepping in front of the bushman. "I will be the donor."

"It won't do, miss," says Harte, gently but firmly. "You've done your share already; now it's my turn. I'm ready when you are, Harne."

"I tell you I *will* be the donor!" she repeats, stamping her foot, her eyes aflame, and her cheeks aglow with excitement. It is no longer the old calm, patient Helen who speaks, but a passionate, imperious woman, determined to have her way. "See, here is life-blood in abundance!" she continues, drawing herself up to the full height of her Junoesque stature. She bares her bosom as she speaks, and tears away the bandage that covers the ragged and bleeding rent beneath the white globes of her breast. "And," she adds, with infinite tenderness in her voice, "I would willingly give it, every drop, to save his life."

Le Harne, observing the condition of nervous excitement under which she is laboring, tries to enter a last protest.

"Really, Miss Compton——" he begins.

Helen turns upon him quickly.

"Shame on you," she says, in a reproachful tone, "to

waste precious time in useless opposition! His frail hold on life may fail even while we talk, and I will not be dissuaded."

Harte sits down, with a curious expression in his strongly-marked face. Accustomed all his rugged life to brook no opposition, it is a novel sensation to him to yield. With a man his course of action would have been clear. In that case he could have simplified matters in a twinkling by pitching the obstinate individual through the window. The only argument he knows is force, and this he cannot apply to a woman. His strong nature is powerless before Helen's headstrong will, and he unwillingly resigns himself to the situation and says no more.

It is a strange scene. The flickering flame of the pendent oil-lamp, though augmented by the light of two wax candles guttering in the necks of empty beer-bottles, barely suffices to relieve the gloom of the rude chamber. At one side of the bed, with his back against the wall, sits the huge bushman, looking dogged and unhappy. On the other is the doctor, busy with his instruments; and at the sick man's head stands Helen, her bosom bare and bleeding, while her long hair, uncoiled, falls in dark, waving masses to the floor.

Outside, the ceaseless drip, drip of water from the eaves falls with monotonous cadence, and through the thin bark partition can be heard the ticking of the clock and the muffled voices of the miners drinking at the bar.

"I have no proper instruments for the operation of transfusion," says the doctor, breaking the silence. "We shall have to be content with an improvisation and the method known as hydrostatic pressure."

He takes a glass tube from his case as he speaks and holds its middle in the flame of one of the candles. When the glass is softened by heat he draws the two ends asunder, thus forming two tubes, each tapering to a point. One of these he affixes to a piece of rubber piping, in the other end of which he inserts a glass funnel. This rude appliance he washes in a solution of boracic acid, and his improvisation is complete. He beckons Harte to come round to hold the funnel. With a few rapid strokes of a keen scalpel he opens the median cephalic vein in Helen's arm, and

the red stream pours forth into the funnel held to receive it. Then, opening the median basilic vein in the sick man's arm, he inserts the point of the canula, and Helen's life-blood begins to flow into Lyndon's empty veins.

When the operation is completed Le Harne applies a dressing to both incisions, and prevails upon Helen to allow him to re-dress the wound in her side, which is still persistently bleeding.

"If you need me again," he says, as he ties the bandage, "you will find me in the bar. I trust, however, I shall not be needed, for I have done all that surgery can do to save his life. The issue depends upon the latent strength of his constitution."

"Leave me, Harte," says Helen, when the doctor goes. "I will take the first watch. I am not in the least tired," she adds, observing the frown of disapproval that clouds Harte's face. "To-morrow, no doubt, I shall feel the fatigue of the journey, and then your turn will come."

Harte, having learned the futility of opposition to her wishes, utters no remonstrance, and silently but unwillingly withdraws.

VI.

HARTE, on leaving the sick-room at Helen's request, proceeds to the other end of the building, and passes the time pacing restlessly to and fro along the veranda.

"Strange it ain't down yet, but it can't be long now," he mutters, half audibly, as he stops to light his pipe.

It is eleven P.M. The rain has ceased, and the pale moon sheds a fitful light upon the sodden earth through remnants of scudding cloud. There is something in the scene that is impressive even to the unimaginative bushman, accustomed as he is to the varied aspects of Nature in the vast solitudes of the "Never Never Country."

What a strange, weird land it is! doubly strange and weird when the shades of night have fallen. What monstrous shapes marshal in the deep gloom of the cañon! Gaunt and ghostly trees! Rugged and fire-scathed rocks!

Crag piled upon crag in wild upheaval, and jagged peaks riven with darkly-yawning chasms that bear mute witness of the primeval cataclysm when molten rocks seethed in hissing seas and Nature writhed in the throes of birth. Eons of ages ere man was, the Southern Cross nightly gleamed upon this wild, unearthly landscape and marked no change. The star the shepherds saw of old shone upon the same unbroken solitude. Near twice a thousand years have fled, and again it is Christmas-eve. But how changed the scene! Man, in his lust for gold, has defiled Nature's sanctuary.

Since noon it has been raining as it only can rain in the tropic belt,—a steady fall of one unbroken sheet of water, pouring down with the rush of a cataract.

Since sundown the creek has risen rapidly, but little reck the miners in the lower camp. They are celebrating that festive season by drinking themselves drunk on fiery liquors in the "Welcome Nugget." From the windows of that vile resort wild strains of discord float, for there is a ball,—save the mark!—given by "Pretty Dick," the proprietor, to a select circle of friends. Bursts of unholy revelry, obscene songs, and brutal jests desecrate the hour. Lewd women,—offscourings of the great Southern cities,—their blood fired by strong drink, fling the last shreds of modesty to the winds, and tread the wild measures of the *danse du ventre* amid the coarse plaudits of their drunken admirers.

Fast and furious grows the fun! The orgie is at its height when the wheezy clock in the outer bar strikes the midnight hour and ushers in the Christmas-morn. But, hark! What strange sound is that? A low but gradually-increasing roar, as of distant but continuous thunder. It rises above the thud of the dance, the discord of fiddle and concertina, and drowns the drunken shout. Silence falls upon the godless throng, and each gazes upon his neighbor with blanching cheek and inquiring eye.

The strange roar draws nearer and nearer. At last its import dawns upon the revellers, and with a wild scream of terror they pour forth into the night. Too late! No human aid can save them from that rushing wall of water, crested with curled and foaming wave! Too late, the tardy shriek for mercy! The mountain torrent, swollen with the

tropic rains, is even now upon them. Another moment and the thunderous tide has swept their bodies onward, and the lower camp is buried forty feet beneath the flood.

* * * * * * * *

When Harte leaves her, Helen seats herself by the sick man's side. She is strangely happy now, and an ineffable sense of peace pervades her whole being. She feels intuitively that Lyndon will live, and—oh, sweet reflection! —he will owe his life to her.

For a long time she sits thus watching his faint breathing. At last a dreamy languorous feeling steals over her wearied senses; the nervous strain she has borne so long is breaking, and exhausted nature clamors for repose. She makes an effort to shake off this increasing somnolence, but the heavy lids droop again and again. She kneels

"Full lowly by the corners of his bed,"

and lays her cheek against the sick man's face.

"I am very tired," she murmurs in his unconscious ear; "but if I must sleep, it shall be near you."

There is a couch at the other end of the room, and when she tries to drag this beside the bed she discovers that she is growing very faint and weak. She bends once more over the sick man, in whose waxen cheeks the faint glow of returning vigor imparted by her life-blood is beginning to appear, and imprints a long kiss on his cold brow.

"Good-night, my love," she whispers, softly. "To-morrow no longer mine."

Then reclining upon the couch she has placed near the bed, she clasps his hand in hers. The tired eyelids close, the long lashes droop upon the pallid cheek, and she sinks insensibly into a heavy, dreamless slumber. And Harte, returning to the sick-room as the purple streaks of dawn brighten in the eastern sky, finds her, as he thinks, still sleeping. But when the first rays of the rising sun stream through the lattice, the bushman sees it is a sleep that knows no waking. The generous heart, drained of its crimson tide to give another life, has ceased to beat, for in the darker hours that precede the dawn the tired spirit has passed into the shadows of the dim Unknown.

The statuesque face, so life-like in its tranquil calm, looks like a sculptured master-piece from the cunning hand of Phidias,—

"—— for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as though she smiled."

L'ENVOI.

WEEKS have passed since the rain. The creek flashes merrily in the sunlight over the smooth stones in its accustomed channel as though no mountain torrent had ever disturbed its crystal pools.

The "claims," silted up by the flood, have been reopened, and the miners of the upper camp delve for gold in the sands of the gorge as feverishly as before. The catastrophe that overwhelmed the lower camp is but an ordinary event in their adventurous lives, and it is forgotten even before the transient traces of the storm have disappeared.

For many days Lyndon hovers between life and death in the darkened room at the "Golden Dawn," but the natural strength of his constitution, fostered by Harte's watchful nursing and Edith's tender care, triumphs in the end.

One calm summer evening, in the early period of his convalescence, Edith leads him—for he is yet gaunt and feeble and the mere shadow of his former stalwart self—down to the belt of myall where he received his wound. There, in a secluded clearing,—where the lyre-bird comes to flaunt his graceful plumes unseen of man, and the golden wattle-trees load the air with their sweet perfume,—he sees a new-made grave among the ferns. Its head is marked by a rough-hewn shaft of glistening quartz. About the stone the wild clematis twines, and through the leaves he reads the one word "HELEN" carved in a smoothly-chiselled space.

And by that solitary grave he first learns from Edith the particulars of his illness. As he listens to the story, memories of Helen—the sad episode in her life, her patient resignation, her classic face and queenly grace, and the

many happy hours he spent with her beneath the shade of those very trees—crowd fast upon him. And when he is told of the sacrifice she made to give him life, he realizes the strength of her unselfish devotion. A convulsive choking he has not known since childhood's tearful days swells in one huge sob to his throat, his eyes grow dim with a sudden mist, and, as he turns feebly away, he recalls the words of a long-forgotten verse,—

"Greater love hath no man than this."

In the days to come, as his vigor returns, Edith many a time walks down with him to the self-same spot. And oft at eve, as they sit and talk, happy in their mutual love, the bell-bird in the copse hard by the grave intones his marvellous note,—a clear and silvery tolling that swells upon the passing breeze, like the mellow vesper chime of some distant forest campanile.

Their happiness is no longer marred by the shadow of parental disapproval, for when the squatter, returning from the coast to Damper Creek, learns from his foreman that "Miss Edith went off of a suddent with a stranger woman from the Gully, and left no word behint," he rides over to the camp to ascertain the why and wherefore of her going.

When he discovers the state of affairs at the Gully his anger at first knows no bounds. His indignation cools, however, when he finds that Lyndon is no longer a penniless adventurer, but is now to some extent a man of wealth, with a prospect of becoming indefinitely wealthier, since he holds a half-share in a quartz-lode of great richness, recently discovered by his friend Harte ; and as wealth is the squatter's criterion of excellence in a suitor, the obdurate old man, after making a transparent show of reluctance as a species of compromise with his dignity, yields to his daughter's wishes, and sets the seal of his approval on her choice. As a *sine qua non* to this act of parental concession, he exacts from Lyndon—a somewhat unnecessary measure, Lyndon thinks—an assurance that he will abandon his adventurous life and settle down to pastoral pursuits at Wollattara Station.

And so it is arranged that they shall leave for the South *viâ* Damper Creek as soon as Lyndon is strong enough to undertake the journey. As a preliminary to the approaching exodus, the squatter sells his station at Damper Creek to old Van Steen at a very profitable figure, and Lyndon and Harte dispose of their valuable "claim" to the representative of a Melbourne syndicate for a sum sufficient to secure each of them a handsome competence for life.

Soon the day arrives which is to be their last in Dirty Mary's Gully. Harte having arranged with old Van Steen for the horses, and instructed the black boy Jim to have them ready at the veranda by four o'clock the following morning, accompanies Lyndon to the bar of the "Golden Dawn." Here they comply with the Antipodean custom of "shouting" for all hands before taking their departure, a proceeding which meets with the unqualified approval of the individual known as Yank, who remarks, with genial generality, after disposing of numerous "nobblers," that it is "real nice to be *lo*cated in a country as encourages sech free institootions,"—an observation with which Blue Peter evinces his entire coincidence by expressing a sanguinary desire to witness the eternal cremation of "every —— —— cuss" who shall advance an assertion to the contrary.

Next morning the five travellers—the squatter, Harte, Edith, Lyndon, and the black boy Jim—are astir long before daybreak. The horses, saddled and packed, neigh shrilly at the hitching-posts. Le Harne, "The Professor," Blue Peter, Yank, Bristol Bill, and other worthies of the Gully, are assembled on the veranda to wish them "God-speed."

There are many final hand-shakings and good wishes. Blue Peter alone is strangely silent. He feels that he cannot find adequate expression for his regrets in Edith's presence; but at the last moment he beckons Harte and Lyndon aside, and gives vent to his feelings in a valedictory burst of unexampled profanity.

And then the little cavalcade rides slowly down the winding path; past the belt of myall, past the flood-swept site of Bristol Bill's humpy up the opposite ascent, and round the bend. At the end of the great curve they halt for a few moments to take a last look at their late abode ere the turn

in the path hides it from their sight. Two hundred feet beneath lies the wide circular sweep of sand, now lost to view in the rising morning mists, where once the lower camp stood. On the other side of the vast amphitheatre they can dimly discern the shadowy outlines of the scattered tents and humpies of the upper camp. But as they look, the shroud-like vapors roll away in the bright beams of breaking day; the towering peaks beyond stand out sharp and clear against the roseate glory of the coming dawn, and the shadows haunting the gloomy depths of the gorge flee one by one before the growing radiance, until the headstone that marks the grave of Helen gleams through the vanishing pall of mist like a spot of pure white snow on the dark face of the cliff, as

> "Morn in the white wake of the morning star
> Comes furrowing all the orient into gold."

THE SIREN OF THREE-MILE BEND.

I.

THREE-MILE BEND was a typical Australian mining-camp. There was the usual mixture of languages, creeds, and nationalities, and representatives of almost every clime mingled fraternally or otherwise beneath its glowing northern skies. It differed perhaps from some of its prototypes in one respect,—it was richer. The nuggets lay in bushels beneath the yellow sands that formed the bed of the huge curve in the creek from which the camp took its name. It was situated in a rugged chain of mountains near the Roper River, in the Northern Territory. Remote as the spot was from civilization, the magnetic influence of the royal metal, finding its subtle way over mountain, desert, creek, and plain, kindled the *auri sacra fames* in the hearts of hundreds of eager fortune-seekers in the far-off cities of the south, and impelled a multitude of adventurous spirits to brave the hardships of those distant wilds.

There were exciting times in the early days. An insulting remark often cost the daring speaker his life; men settled old scores—new ones too, for that matter—with the knife; and whenever the stillness of the night was broken by the sharp crack of a pistol-shot,—as it frequently was,—those who had retired to rest simply turned in their blankets and muttered, "Another 'chum' lost the number of his mess." There was no restraint. Law and order did not exist even in name. The lust for gold aroused the basest passions of the human heart in all their fierce intensity. For gold, men quarrelled, fought, and died. For gold, half the decalogue was set at naught. For gold, honor was lost, conscience stifled, and friendship betrayed. "*Aurum omnes, victa pietate colerunt.*"

II.

DICK HOGAN and Charles Inglefield were two among the many who went to the field, Hogan with the first rush, Inglefield some twelve months later. Two individuals more dissimilar in every respect it would be impossible to conceive. Theirs was one of those incongruous friendships so often seen in mining-camps. Inglefield was young, handsome, and graceful; Hogan was middle-aged, rugged, and plain. Inglefield was a Melbourne 'Varsity man, and consequently educated, while Hogan's mental attainments were of the most ordinary kind. Inglefield was shallow, selfish, and unprincipled; Hogan was simple, generous, and true-hearted.

Their connection was of some years' standing, and dated from a day when Hogan jumped from an incoming steamer in Cleveland Bay and perilled his own life to save that of Inglefield, who had been accidentally knocked overboard from the deck of a passing cutter. That was a fortunate day in more ways than one for Inglefield. He had landed in Queensland several months before with a few hundred pounds, a liberal education, and an all but hopeless prospect of making amends for a wasted life in Victoria by a new start in the younger colony. He found, as many before him had done, that the *sine qua non* of success in the new country was work, and hard work at that. But for work of any kind he had no aptitude or inclination whatever. At the time of his rescue by Hogan he had done nothing, his little capital had dwindled to two figures, and the outlook for the future was particularly dismal.

Hogan at that time was a simple-hearted, ignorant miner, who could barely write his own name. Sensitively conscious of his deficiencies, he had at once recognized in Inglefield a mind superior to his own, and he looked up to the University man with the respect ignorance always concedes to education.

Inglefield was at first amused and then bored by this rude homage, but finding that his preserver, so far from wishing to terminate the acquaintanceship, seemed to take a sort of fraternal interest in him, he accepted the situation with a serenity none the less philosophic in that Hogan,

with the effusive generosity characteristic of his class, insisted on paying all the bills. He became still more reconciled to the infliction when he learned that Hogan was a successful miner, with the result of several profitable enterprises on the Heberton tin-fields lying to his credit in the Queensland National Bank in the shape of a snug balance of two thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds.

In view of this comparative wealth Inglefield felt no compunction in requesting a loan of fifty pounds, and when, in response, Hogan handed him a check with a vermicular signature for twice that amount he, figuratively speaking, kicked himself for his moderation.

One evening as they were dallying over the third bottle in the smoking-room at their hotel, Hogan said, in the rude vernacular of the bush, "Pardner, you are a scholard an' I ain't. Now, I've spent 'bout all the time I want to in this yere city, an' I'm thinkin' of goin' up to Cairns nex' week for the Mulgrave to prospect a bit. I was made for work, *I* was, an' you wasn't. No offence, I can see for myself. You're what they call a gentleman, *you* are, an' I ain't. But what I want to put to ye is this: as I said afore, I'm no scholard, *I'm* not, but I want to l'arn; it's hard work doin' business when you can't neither read nor write, an' bein' as you ain't got no money—no offence, ye're welcome to half I've got—or ye wouldn't ha' borrowed o' me, an' seein' as ye seem to ha' had plenty o' schoolin', what I put to ye is this: you come along wi' me, an' we'll go prospectin' here an' there, *we* will,—I'm reckoned pretty lucky, *I* am,—an' I'll do the work an' ye can take half the dust, providin' you l'arn me to read an' write an' figger some, for, darn my skin, I never had no schoolin', *I* didn't."

Inglefield's eyes gleamed at this proposition. An arrangement in which he received half the profits while the other undertook all the labor—for he did not look upon his tutorial duties in the light of work—suited his temperament exactly. But he thought it politic to affect to be unable to fall in with the scheme; it would not do for a man of his superior breeding to be patronized by this bush boor. Hogan, however, was not to be denied. He repeated his request, as Inglefield had calculated he would do, and this

afforded the latter the pretext of yielding to pressure. So, as he phrased it, "he subordinated his personal interests to the claims of friendship," a spirit of magnanimous self-denial that touched Hogan very deeply.

The preliminaries having been agreed upon, Inglefield laid aside his "store clothes" and donned the moleskin trousers, laced leggings, red shirt, and broad-brimmed hat of the typical miner, a costume that became his graceful person to picturesque advantage.

The curious compact between them was rigidly kept. During the following two years Inglefield received quite a respectable sum as his moiety of the profits resulting from his partner's native shrewdness and judgment, while Hogan's humble ambition "to read an' write an' figger some" was not only attained, but he learned to express himself in tolerable English, and acquired quite a little fund of general knowledge besides.

At Charters Towers they heard of the discovery of gold on the Roper River. Hogan, believing the new field to be one of great promise, proposed to go, but Inglefield demurred. The novelty of a miner's nomadic existence had worn away. Moreover, as a result of Hogan's labor he again had a bank account, and he longed once more for the excitement and dissipations of his past life. At Townsville they parted, but not before Hogan had exacted a promise from his whilom partner to come north and rejoin him if the field should turn out well.

"I consider you my partner yet," he had said, with moist eyes, as they shook hands for the last time at the gangway of the steamship "Warrego," "and half of what I strike is yours; and I'll write to the post-office at Melbourne and let you know how my luck pans out." The simple miner felt the parting keenly, for during the two years of their association together he had become warmly attached to his city-bred chum. But Inglefield at heart despised his humble friend. His shallow, selfish nature experienced no regret at the severance of old ties. He sailed southward with a light heart and a heavy purse, intent only on the meretricious pleasures to be purchased with his friend's hard-won gold.

III.

SHE was plump, *petite*, and pretty, with a profusion of golden hair, a pair of laughing, violet eyes, and a rose-bud of a mouth, which, when she smiled, rippled into dimples, and disclosed two perfect rows of dazzlingly white and even teeth that gleamed like pearls in a coral setting. Her delicate loveliness was a revelation to the miners of Three-Mile Bend, and aroused quite a furor of admiration in their rugged bosoms. It is true there were one or two other women in the camp, but they were middle-aged, slatternly creatures, whose presence did not inspire any great amount of chivalric enthusiasm. Compared with these she appeared to the astonished miners like a radiant vision from another world.

Her arrival in the camp was the sensation of the hour, and robbed the current topic of conversation—the shooting of Red-nosed Bob by Whistling Pete—of all its interest. They called her the Queen of the Ranges, an appellation which, however, soon became abbreviated to Queenie.

Two months agone she had been a bar-maid in a swell hotel in Sydney, with but one desire in life,—to be rich,—and with no apparent prospect of ever attaining that ambition. The husband of the woman with whom she then lived was an ex-miner, and when, seized with the gold fever, he announced his intention of taking his wife and family to the new El Dorado, she resolved to go with them. An idea had occurred to her practical mind. She had a little capital of some three hundred pounds, and with this she determined to purchase a stock of liquors in Sydney, for consignment to the port in the Arafura Sea, and transhipment to the new gold-field. She would go there and retail them herself.

"There is five hundred per cent. profit in it," she had said to herself, "and who knows but that I may marry some lucky digger?"

"Go, by all means," the ex-miner had said, in answer to her request for advice. "A hotel on a gold-field is worth more than a well-paying claim, and with your face you ought to draw half the trade of the camp. Being a carpenter, I can do a little towards giving you a start. I

haven't forgot the time you nursed my wife through her sickness, and I'll build a shanty for you first thing after we get there. Yes, go, by all means."

And this is how she came to be in Three-Mile Bend. She was not slow to see the impression she had made, and she determined to profit by it. As soon as her stock-in-trade arrived by the pack-train she began by revolutionizing the hotel system of Three-Mile Bend. There were half a dozen other "hotels" in the camp, dirty, stuffy little dens, built of bark, where bad whiskey was dispensed in a devil-may-care sort of a way across an unplaned board that did duty for a bar. "Queenie's," as the miners called her place, was a spacious, well-lighted "shanty." The bar was covered with marbled oil-cloth, and kept scrupulously clean. In other places men stood up to drink for lack of facilities to sit down. Queenie had several tables made. These she also neatly covered, and her patrons were thus enabled to play a game of cards in comfort whenever they wished. She kept her liquors in tastefully-labelled bottles instead of forbidding-looking jars, and she knew how to mix all kinds of drinks that were grateful to palates weary of a long course of fiery whiskey and flat beer. It was wonderful, too, to see the moral power she exercised over the minds of these lawless men. In the other "hotels" fights and shooting scrapes were of nightly occurrence. Nothing of the kind ever happened at Queenie's. One night two miners had grown quarrelsome over a game of cards. Knives were drawn, and there was a prospect of bloodshed, when she rushed fearlessly in between them and, with flashing eyes and imperious mien, ordered them to desist. The two men stared at her in stupid amazement for a minute or two, then they laughed and shook hands. This courageous action on the little woman's part endeared her to the hearts of the whole community. After that night, if any man had attempted to create a disturbance, she could have counted on a dozen stalwart champions to throw the brawler out.

She understood their wild natures exactly. She had a pleasant greeting for every one, and, in the evenings, as she glided about the room, smilingly executing her numerous orders, the eyes of these rough men followed her dainty figure with honest admiration. There was not a

man among them who would not have been willing to do and dare anything for her sake.

"I never see the likes," said Whistling Pete, the camp oracle, to a circle of bibulous satellites. "The inflooence o' that little critter is somethin' amazin'. Look at Big Mike. He never shaved for ten year, an' now he's gone an' cut off his beard; he parts his hair in the middle, an' wears store pants all the time, an' all on account o' her. Then there's Fossicking Bob, who never *was* known to put on a clean shirt till the one he was wearin' fell to pieces, so to speak. He's had his hair cut, an' he spruces hisself up every night, an' sports a biled dickey an' a red tie. Why, I believe Whiskey Jim 'ud take to drinkin' soft stuff if *she* arskt him. Lord, what fools these wimmen do make o' us, to be sure." And Whistling Pete held his whiskey against the light, looked through it critically for a moment with one eye closed, and then slowly swallowed it with an air of profound meditation. Whistling Pete being the deadliest shot in the camp, his remarks were followed by a running comment of acquiescence.

No wonder, then, that the little adventuress absorbed fully three-fourths of the patronage of the camp, and that dust and nuggets flowed into her coffers in a continuous golden stream. During the first three months she had no less than six offers of marriage. To attain her ambition she was quite prepared to sacrifice sentiment to riches, and was perfectly willing to marry any man, however uncouth, if he only had the recommendation of sufficient wealth. But her would-be lovers, though owners of rich claims, spent everything they earned, and she had learned enough of mining vicissitudes to know that even a "ten-ounce-a-day" claim may "play out" all at once and leave its owner with no more capital than a pick.

There was only one man in the camp who came up to her mercenary ideal. His name was Dick Hogan. The miners called him "Lucky" Hogan, and not without reason. His claim, which was by far the richest in the diggings, had yielded "pocket" after "pocket" of nuggets. Hogan was a quiet, reserved man, who lived a solitary life in a tent remote from the camp. He was seldom seen away from the vicinity of his claim, save when he came into the Bend

to deposit his gold at the Bank Agency, and he had never visited Queenie's.

She had several times heard of "Lucky" Hogan and his valuable claim. "If I find these tales are true," said the sprightly little adventuress, "I'll marry him," and she laughed a gay little laugh at her own conceit in leaving Mr. Hogan's possible objection to the arrangement out of the question altogether. So one evening she addressed a cautious inquiry on the subject of Hogan's wealth to Whistling Pete, who, as a rule, knew a great deal more about his neighbor's business than he did about his own.

"Why, bless yer pretty face, miss," said Whistling Pete, with bush gallantry, "Dick Hogan's claim is a perfect Mount Morgan.* It's bin pannin' out fifty ounces a day for the past three weeks, an' only yesterday he struck a vein o' quartz in a new prospect that'll likely go ten ounces to the ton. Why, he must ha' took ten thousand pounds' worth o' gold out o' the hole at least, an' he's refused an offer o' thirty thousand, cash down, from the bank since he struck the reef, an' I shouldn't be surprised if——" At this point a man appeared in the door-way, and Whistling Pete paused. He bent over the counter and, placing his hand to his mouth, said, in a stage whisper, "That's him, miss. That's Lucky Hogan hisself."

Queenie glanced towards the door, and saw an unkempt-looking man, apparently about forty-five years of age, dressed in a miner's working-suit. He walked with a slight stoop, and his grizzled beard was plentifully sprinkled with gray. His bearing was awkward and uncouth, and he had never in his best days been more than an ordinary-looking man. He had only one good feature,—his eyes, which were large, dark, luminous orbs, soft and tender as a woman's. In them one could plainly read the trustful, generous nature of the rugged Crœsus. "Rough," thought Queenie, "very rough; but also very simple, and very rich."

Whistling Pete left the bar and walked over to the solitary table at which Hogan had taken his seat. He was curious to know the meaning of the lucky digger's unusual visit to Queenie's.

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* The richest gold deposit in Australia, perhaps in the world.

"Good-evenin', Mr. Hogan," he said, deferentially. "Good-evenin', sir. It ain't often we have the pleasure o' seein' you among us here."

"No," said Hogan. "That's a fact. This is the first time I've been so far from my claim; but I heard you had tables up here, and I came around the bend to write a letter. I want to bring my partner up here from Melbourne."

"Why, I never knowed you had a partner, Mr. Hogan," said Whistling Pete, whose curiosity was aroused at this piece of news.

"Yes," said Hogan, who was in a communicative mood. "Yes, he's a young chap,—a city chap. I met him in Townsville when I was last in Queensland, and took quite a liking to him. Mine is a lonely sort of life," he continued, half sadly, "and I'm longing for companionship. Then, again, I've got some sort of a complaint here,"—he placed his hand over his heart,—"Anjner pectris I think the Port Darwin doctor called it,—I didn't rightly catch the name,—which takes me in stiffish spells at times. My partner promised to come if I wrote for him, and, as I'm likely to go off the hooks all of a sudden, I thought I'd have him by in case anything should happen, and then——" A silvery voice interrupted him. It said,—

"Mr. Hogan, what shall I bring you to drink?"

The miner looked up, and saw the lovely face and wonderful eyes of the little adventuress looking smilingly down into his own rugged visage. He had often heard extravagant praises of this woman's beauty, but without any degree of interest. All his life had been spent in the bush, and he had no higher ideal of womanhood than the shanty-keepers' wives with whom he occasionally came in contact in his wanderings. Queenie's dainty, piquant beauty took him quite by surprise. He stared at her in speechless amazement, until Whistling Pete, who chafed at any delay, however slight, with a drink in the near perspective, put an end to the pause by ordering whiskey for himself and writing materials for "Mr. Hogan." Hogan gazed after her in rapt admiration as she went to execute the order. Though nothing more than a perfect specimen of a very ordinary type of beauty, to the untutored miner she appeared like a goddess amid such rude surroundings. His eyes dwelt

upon the supple curves of her small and graceful figure, her slender white hands, her snowy throat with its circlet of creamy lace, and caught the gleaming sheen of her dead-gold hair as she moved to and fro in the lamp-light. And when she came back with the order, and turned her great violet eyes upon him and smiled, a flush arose to his weather-beaten cheek, and he dropped his gaze in awkward confusion.

Before he left he wrote a long letter to "Charles Inglefield, Esq.," telling him all about the diggings, and reminding him of his promise, and that "Charles Inglefield, Esq.," might not be prevented from coming by lack of funds, he inclosed a draft on the Bank of Victoria for two hundred pounds. And then he bade her good-night, and walked thoughtfully home to his tent.

IV.

SOME weeks later a young man stood on the steps of the Melbourne post-office reading a letter he had just called for. He was evidently surprised at its contents, and he read it half aloud in disjointed scraps, mingled with running comments of his own.

"Took three thousand pounds out in three months." "By Jove!" "Offered thirty thousand pounds in cash for the reef." "Whew! Why, damme, the old boor will be a millionaire!" "Living all by myself and feel lonely." "The devil he does; so do I." "You promised to come north if my luck panned out well." "So I did, but I did not expect my own luck to turn out so cursed rough." "I should be very pleased to see you; will you come?" "Will I come? You bet I'll come, my unsophisticated friend; I want some of that thirty thousand pounds very badly,—especially just now." "I've always considered you my partner, my boy, and half of what I've made is yours, and half the claim also." "By Jove! this is the devil's own luck." "I send you a draft on the Bank of Victoria to meet your expenses." "It's

deuced fortunate for me you do." And "Charles Inglefield, Esq.," tore the letter to fragments, and, having refreshed himself with a brandy and soda on the strength of the good news, walked jauntily to the Bank of Victoria, where he cashed his draft.

Thence he went to the office of the Australian Steam Navigation Company and secured a cabin passage in the next steamer for the north.

V.

AFTER his first visit Hogan became a regular nightly frequenter of Queenie's. She was the first beautiful woman he had seen, and her beauty completely fascinated him. He soon appreciated the difference between the comfortable bar and his comfortless tent. Every night he was greeted with a smiling welcome, the easiest chair and snuggest corner were kept for him, and his glass of grog was always mixed exactly to his taste. And Queenie would come and sit opposite to him each evening, and laugh and chat with him in her own naïve and charming manner until he became intoxicated with her presence. He had no intimates in Three-Mile Bend, and, like many men who lead a solitary life, he was addicted to a habit of expressing his thoughts aloud.

"This won't do, Dick, my boy," he said to himself, at the end of a month; "you're getting too fond of that little woman. What can an innocent, delicate young thing like that have in common with a rough, weather-beaten hulk like you. She's made of different clay to you;" and he looked down at his knotted, toil-worn hands and sighed. "You'll have to knock off going up there, or you'll be making a fool of yourself." So by a mighty effort of self-restraint he remained away for three nights, and was miserable. For the first time in his life he experienced the joylessness of his existence. He looked out upon the circling chain of sun-baked hills and the wide expanse of brown and barren plain. All his toilsome days had been spent

amid solitudes like this, and the only gleam of sunshine that had brightened his lonely life had been his friendship for Inglefield. But now his solitary heart yearned for something to love, something to cherish. He was rich, and could afford to give up this wandering, friendless existence. More than once in his reveries he caught himself dreaming of a placid retirement in some lovely spot in the south. If he could only believe that Queenie would be willing to share that retirement with him, he would indeed be happy; for he had learned to love the little woman with all the strength of his rugged, faithful nature. But how could this fair young creature in all the pride of her youth and beauty possibly care anything for him, a gray-headed, middle-aged man, old enough to be her father?

"No," he said to himself, sadly; "I'm too rough, too old; such happiness is not for me. I'll go near her no more." But his strength of will failed him. On the fourth night he was again in his accustomed corner at the hotel.

"Oh, Mr. Hogan," she said, with her sweetest smile, when he entered, "I am so glad to see you! I have missed you so much. I was beginning to fear you were ill."

The miner's sunburnt cheek flushed with pleasure and hope at the warmth of her greeting. Perhaps she cared something for him after all, and that night he walked home with a jauntier step and a lighter heart. "I'll wait a week or two," he said to himself; "she hardly knows me yet."

Poor, simple-minded Hogan! She knew him but too well. He wore his heart upon his sleeve, and the keen woman of the world read it like a book, and laughed in secret at her easy conquest.

Every day now he left off work at noon and went up to the hotel. In the afternoon the bar was deserted, and he could talk to her alone. He always brought her the largest nugget he had found during the morning. Many a time he was on the verge of approaching the subject nearest his heart, but he hesitated at the supreme moment. He was entirely ignorant of amorous amenities, and knew not what to say.

"This will never do, Dick, my boy," he said to himself one night. "You've got to do the asking, she hasn't. You've known her now nearly two months, and you'd

better try your luck." Next morning he went to work at his claim as usual. In the first cradle of dirt he washed he found a nugget of gold of extraordinary size. It was the largest that had been found on the field. "It'll weigh over three pounds," he said, surveying it with admiration. "It's two days' work in itself, so I'll knock off and take it up to her, and just ask her to take it along with myself."

He found Queenie seated at one of the tables in the bar engaged in some feminine occupation. As she came forward to greet him with a smile, he thought she had never looked so lovely. He sat down beside her. Several times he essayed to broach the momentous subject, but each time he was at a loss for words. His manner was nervous and embarrassed; he could only talk disconnectedly in an aimless way upon the most commonplace topics. At last he mustered up courage to come to the point. "Miss," he said, in a husky voice, and then he gave a great gulp and paused. She sat beside him apparently unconscious of his agitation, though she knew very well what was coming. "Miss," he began again, "I—I—it's a fine day." Now, there had not been a cloud in the sky for months, and the observation was so inapt and unexpected, and was blurted out with such comical solemnity, that she almost laughed outright in his face. But restraining the impulse, she leaned forward, gazed out of the window, and said, in a tone of surprise,—

"Why, *so* it is, Mr. Hogan, a beautiful day," as though she had previously been under the impression that it was raining very hard outside.

An awkward pause ensued, and Hogan shuffled about uneasily in his chair. At last he drew in a deep breath, as men do when about to undertake some great physical feat, and stammered, "I—I wanted to ask you if—that is, I wanted to say—in fact, I—I—only came over—to—to—make you a present." He put his hand in his pocket and drew forth the nugget. Queenie's eyes gleamed at the sight of the huge yellow lump of gold.

"Oh, Mr. Hogan, I cannot take it; it is too kind of you," she said, meaning to take it all the while. He pressed it on her, and she took it with feigned reluctance. Another pause. Her hand toyed with the nugget in her lap. Ho-

gan took the slender fingers in his horny palm. She did not withdraw them, but turned her head away with an admirable assumption of modest confusion. Hogan was emboldened to proceed.

"Miss," he said, in a low tone that vibrated with intense earnestness, "I'm only a rough miner. I'm not much to look at as looks go, and I'm getting on in years. But if I'm rough, I've got an honest, manly heart, and it would make me the happiest man in the Territory to-day if—if—you'd take it along with the nugget."

"Mr. Hogan," she said, with demure look and downcast eyes, "I have long had a sincere regard for you, and if you think I could make you happy, I——" She paused, as if at a loss for words.

"You will be my wife?" he added, joyously.

"Yes," she said, and the comedy was over.

He stayed for some time, and talked to her of his plans for selling the reef as soon as it was developed sufficiently to ascertain its value. This suited her views exactly; she was utterly weary of this rude life, and longed to make her appearance as a woman of wealth and fashion in the *beau-monde* of the south. She heard of the existence of the partner and his prospective arrival in Three-Mile Bend with some misgiving. She said but little on the subject, but she inwardly determined that Hogan's ridiculous intention of giving him a half-share in the claims should never be fulfilled. As for Hogan, he underwent a complete metamorphosis. He trimmed his unkempt beard and changed his clay-stained garments every evening for store clothes. His step was sprightlier, his eye was brighter, perfect happiness shone in every line of his honest visage, and he looked ten years younger.

A week or so later a pack-train wound slowly into camp along the creek. When it halted at the paddock a horseman detached himself from the group of packers and rode up to Queenie's, where he dismounted and stepped up to the bar.

It was not yet noon; the miners were at work in the claims, and the hotel was deserted. The new arrival was a young man of handsome presence and graceful bearing, and when he saw that the bar was attended by a pretty

woman, instead of the dishevelled slattern or bearded ruffian, as is usual in bush shanties, he doffed his broad-brimmed hat in courteous salutation.

"Can you tell me where I am likely to find Mr. Hogan?" he inquired. "The packers told me you would be able to direct me from here."

She gave him the required information, but the stranger seemed in no hurry to leave. The fact is he was agreeably surprised to find so pretty a woman in this remote spot, and he ordered something to drink that the interview might be prolonged. In the course of half an hour's conversation he found that beauty was not her only charm. She was also educated, witty, and vivacious.

"By George! she's a stunner," was his mental comment as he strode down the creek towards Hogan's claim. "How the devil did she get into this God-forsaken country, I wonder?"

"So that's Mr. Charles Inglefield, the partner," thought Queenie. "Well, it's one comfort he's a gentleman, and a handsome one, too. He will be able to talk to me in decent English at any rate, which will be quite a relief from the conversation of these clownish diggers."

Inglefield had nearly reached the solitary tent out in the bend when a clay-stained figure emerged from a hole in the ground to his right. It was Hogan returning from work. The miner, who was short-sighted, stopped to await the stranger's approach; but as soon as he recognized his partner he rushed forward with arms extended. "God bless you, my boy!" he said, with tears in his eyes. "You don't know how pleased I am to see you. It's been mighty lonely out here without you; why, it must be a year since we parted. But come and look at the claim."

"You don't mean to say you've been offered thirty thousand pounds for that mud-hole?" said Inglefield, looking down into the claim with an incredulous air.

"No, no, not for this, though this mud-hole, as you call it, is not to be sneezed at. I've taken eight thousand pounds out of that hole,—half of it is to your credit at the Agency,—and it still pans out close on twenty ounces a day. The claim the bank wants to buy is a quartz reef out there in the ranges. We'll look at it to-morrow. It's in

your name. You see I had to take it out in your name,—it don't matter whose name it's in being as we're partners,—for the mining laws don't allow a man to hold two 'prospects' at once unless he buys them, and this one here was too good to give up, so I registered the reef in your name,—I'll give you the license when we get to the tent,—and I pay a fellow called Whiskey Jim an ounce a day to work at it to keep it from being 'jumped.' There's several other reefs been found since, and there'll be a set of stampers up in a month or two, so's we can crush the stone, and then we'll put a whole gang at work. If the reef's half what I think it is, it's dirt cheap at three times thirty thousand pounds."

Inglefield gasped. Ninety thousand pounds, and this claim was in his name, in fact was his property. It is true Hogan considered himself a partner, but supposing he quarrelled with Hogan, supposing he wished to sell and Hogan didn't, there was nothing to prevent him from doing as he pleased. The claim was his absolutely, and Hogan would have no voice in the matter at all. These thoughts passed through his mind like a flash, and even then his scheming brain was busy devising an act of selfish treachery against the humble, generous-hearted man whose toil had placed wealth within his reach. He was aroused from his thoughts by Hogan.

"Come with me to the tent," he said. "I'll just change my clothes, and then I'll show you something I value even more than the claims."

"What on earth can this be?" thought Inglefield. "By the way, Dick," he asked, as they walked on, "who is that remarkably pretty little woman in the shanty over there on the slope?"

"I was just going to take you down to introduce you," said Hogan, with a mysterious smile.

"I was never so surprised in my life," continued Inglefield; "one would never expect to find a woman of her stamp in this infernal desert."

"No, that's a fact," said Hogan; "and she's just as innocent as she is pretty, though she does keep a hotel; and I'll tell you what, my boy,—I may as well tell you now, since you've seen her,—I'm the luckiest man in these

diggings in more ways than one. She's promised to be my wife. Congratulate me."

Inglefield uttered some stereotyped phrases with an affectation of warmth, but in his heart he was thinking, "What on earth can that woman see in this uncouth old chap?" Suddenly he remembered the claim. "Ah! ah!" he said to himself; "I have it. It's the claim the little damsel with the violet eyes is in love with, not the man. I wonder what she will say when she finds that I hold the certificate?" And with thoughts like these in his mind he walked with Hogan up the creek to the hotel.

It was soon noticed by the miners of Three-Mile Bend that Hogan's partner was not a worker. He lounged about Queenie's all day long, drank wine, and laughed and talked with the pretty proprietress from sun-up to sun-down. When Whistling Pete, with mild sarcasm, remarked to Hogan that he better keep a watch on his partner, or he would "be killin' hisself with work," the latter replied, somewhat warmly, "That's all right. The boy's no worker, and couldn't work if he tried. He's city bred, and never did anything in his life. But I've known him two years now, and he did what was right by me: he taught me to read and write, and in fact all I know. Work's pleasure to me, and it ain't to him, and if he don't like to work, it's nobody's business but his own. I'm his partner, and I'm satisfied, and I reckon everybody else may as well be."

As for Queenie, she was delighted with Hogan's partner. He knew all the latest gossip from the great southern cities; his manner was easy and well bred, and he had a way of making himself agreeable that seemed perfectly delightful, after the rude *gaucheries* of the diggers. And Inglefield found in Queenie a woman with a thorough knowledge of the world; a woman of ready and cultivated wit, to whom it was a pleasure to talk, and he saw that his stay in Three-Mile Bend bade fair to be one of the most interesting episodes in his life, instead of a period of dreary *ennui* as he had expected it would be.

During the day the miners were at work, and little or no trade was done at the bar. Queenie had formerly been in the habit of whiling away this time in sewing or some other

feminine occupation, but now she closed the place and took long rides with Inglefield along the creek and in the wooded valleys of the ranges. And the trustful Hogan, in his ignorance of the ways of the world, saw these things with an approving eye, and said,—

"That's right, my boy; it must be lonely for her up there alone these long days, and you're just the chap to talk to her and amuse her." A hint from any one as to the possibility of treachery on the part of his friend would have been taken by him as a personal insult, and he would as soon have doubted his existence as Queenie's faith. And so these daily rides continued, while Hogan went about his work in blissful fatuity, happier each succeeding evening in that he was one day nearer his wedding-day.

Inglefield, as a man about town in the great southern cities, had had his little *affaires du cœur* by the dozen, but steeled, as he fancied he was, against the arrows of the blind god, he found his pulses stirred by this woman as they had never been before. There was an indefinable personal charm about her and a witchery in her deep violet eyes that enthralled him. One afternoon as they were returning from the daily ride he reined in his steed, turned towards her, and said, abruptly,—

"Alice,"—he called her by her true name, which no one else, not even Hogan himself, had learned,—"Alice, I love you." She raised her great liquid eyes to his; the glamour of her beauty was upon him, and he bent forward in his saddle and kissed her on the lips.

"Really, Mr. Inglefield," she said, with calm composure, "you are quite histrionic. What would Mr. Hogan think of the partner in whom he places such implicit faith had he witnessed this little scene?"

"But, Alice," he said, "do you really intend to marry that clod?"

"Certainly I do," she replied. "Do you think I wish to spend my entire existence in this Sahara?"

"But at any rate you cannot possibly care anything for him; he is old enough to be your father."

"You forget that his claim is worth ever so many thousand pounds," she said, with a cynical little smile.

"You are mistaken," he said, laconically.

"How so?" she asked, in some surprise.

By way of reply he drew forth a paper, which he handed to her to read. It was a miner's license giving him the right to work a certain claim known as "Eureka Reef."

"What does this mean?" she inquired.

"It means," he answered, in a triumphant tone, "that the claim is mine. It appears that Hogan was not allowed by the mining laws to hold two claims, so he registered the Eureka Reef in my name. The claim is mine absolutely, and I have made up my mind to sell it and get out of this infernal desert."

Her face grew pale as marble. So, after all, her scheme had fallen through, and her dream of wealth which she had thought so near realization, had vanished. She spurred her horse ahead that he might not see her bitter disappointment, but he caught up to her and placed his hand upon her rein.

"Alice," he said, "listen to me. You must have made money since you have been here. I have four thousand pounds which Hogan has already placed to my credit at the bank, and I can raise thirty thousand, perhaps more, on the claim to-morrow. This sum will enable us to begin life afresh in London or Paris, where we have the advantage of being unknown. Let us not inquire into the past, which perhaps in either case will not bear a rigid investigation. I have already told you that I love you. Come with me." She heard him out in silence. Hardened woman of the world though she was, such a piece of cold-blooded villany as this infamous proposition to rob the confiding Hogan of wife and fortune at one stroke made her shudder. But she could not allow any feelings of compunction to thwart her ambition; she was determined to attain that at any cost.

This handsome scoundrel was not indifferent to her, and he really owned the claim, while for the simple miner to whom she had plighted her faith she did not care one jot. She looked up into Inglefield's face. "Let us leave this frightful place as soon as possible," she murmured.

"To-day is Monday," he said. "I will go down to the bank and obtain an advance on the claim in the morning, and we can leave in the afternoon when the miners are at

work. This will give us ample time to catch the coach at Dead-Man's Gulch."

"But do you know the way?" she asked. "I have heard that it is considered a very dangerous ride for those who are not familiar with the country."

"Bah!" he said. "It is a mere bagatelle. The first twenty miles are in the ranges, the track is rough, but well defined. Then comes a stretch of seventy-five miles of sandy plain, which is monotonous but entirely free from danger. We have only to ride straight ahead. There is a water-hole half-way across; it is barely a month since I made the journey, and I know the landmarks well."

That evening she went about her business as usual, and Hogan thought she had never looked so bright and pretty. She laughed and chatted with him with more than ordinary vivacity. She felt no qualms of conscience at the blight she was about to bring upon this man's happiness; perhaps, if the truth were known, it was not the first time she had done this thing.

In the morning, Inglefield went down to the bank, and asked the manager point-blank what he was prepared to offer for the claim. "I have already offered Mr. Hogan thirty thousand pounds for it," said the official, "and I am prepared to stand by the bid."

"But Mr. Hogan has nothing to do with it," said Inglefield. "The claim is mine and is registered in my name."

"Yes, I am aware of that," said the manager; "but you are partners, are you not?"

"That may be," replied Inglefield, coolly; "but the fact remains that this claim is mine, and I wish to sell it."

"I should not care to act in the matter," said the man of business, "without consulting Mr. Hogan."

"Very well," said Inglefield, "I'll bid you good-morning; with such a property I need not hunt for a purchaser."

Now, the manager was perfectly well aware of the great value of the reef; he knew that it was a bargain at twice the sum he had offered. The claim was indubitably Inglefield's, and though he knew that in selling it Inglefield was guilty of the basest ingratitude towards Hogan, he could not allow ethics to stand in the way of business.

"I'll repeat the original offer," he said, as Inglefield turned towards the door.

"I want fifty thousand pounds," said Inglefield.

"I cannot increase my advance," said the manager. Though after half an hour's discussion he did increase it by five thousand pounds, for he was as anxious to secure the property as Inglefield was to sell it. At this price the bargain was made, and Inglefield, having signed the necessary transfer papers, left the agency with a sight draft on Sydney for that amount, together with his credit balance in his pocket.

At three o'clock that afternoon two sturdy little pack-horses stood in front of Queenie's fully equipped for the journey to Dead-Man's Gulch. Inglefield strode up and down the veranda waiting impatiently for Queenie. She came forth looking very lovely in a short dark-blue habit. In her hand she held a huge nugget of gold,—Hogan's last gift. "We may as well take this," she said, handing it to Inglefield, who placed it in a pouch at his belt. "I think that is all," she added, "except my money; I have over two thousand pounds in the bank."

"Oh, that's all right," he said, hurriedly. "We can draw against that in Sydney." He was about to lift her in the saddle when the tall form of Whistling Pete appeared on the scene. Whistling Pete, having had a run of bad luck, had given up work for the day several hours earlier than usual, and was coming up to Queenie's to drown his disgust in a "nobbler" or two of whiskey.

"Afternoon, miss," he said.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Pete," replied Queenie, without the slightest trace of discomposure. "You came just in time to do me a favor. Mr. Inglefield and I are going for a rather longer ride than usual, and I should be so much obliged if you would attend to the bar in my absence. In case we are not back by the time Mr. Hogan comes up, you might tell him—— But stay, I'll write him a little note. I'll not be a moment," she said, turning to Inglefield. She went into her room at the back of the bar, and wrote a few lines. "There," she said, with one of her sweetest smiles, "if you will give that to Mr. Hogan for me it will explain my absence."

"I wrote the note for a purpose," she said, in reply to an inquiry Inglefield made as to its necessity as they rode away. "He will not feel inclined to follow us after he has read it."

Whistling Pete gazed after them until a turn in the track hid them from view. "I reckon you *are* going for a ride, an' a mighty long ride, too," he muttered,—his quick eye had noticed the water-bottles and bags of corn at the saddle-bows,—"an' if I tend the bar till ye return I reckon this yere claim's mine ontirely."

Whistling Pete was not troubled by any punctilious scruples. As soon as they were out of sight he opened the note and spread it out flat upon the bar. Unfortunately, however, his early education had been neglected. He could read the label on a bottle with remarkable facility, but he might as well have tried to decipher a transcript from an Egyptian obelisk as the fine Italian hand in which Queenie's note was written. At sun-down, when the miners returned from work, they found Whistling Pete behind the bar rearranging the bottles on the shelves with a proprietary air.

"Read that," he said, handing the note to Whiskey Jim. "Read her out aloud."

Whiskey Jim took the note, and, assuming a tragic manner, read as follows:

"DEAR MR. HOGAN,—In accepting your generous offer of marriage I fear I allowed myself to construe mere sentiments of a warm regard into the promptings of affection, for I have lately learned that that undivided love, without which no union can be truly happy, is not mine to give you. Believe me, I am sincerely sorry, for I esteem you very highly. But we cannot control the dictates of our hearts; and since that love which I had thought was yours has been won by another, I feel sure you will not be unwilling to terminate our engagement. I deemed it best to write, as being less painful to both of us than a personal explanation.

"We leave for the coast on the Saturday coach.

"Wishing you every happiness and prosperity in all your undertakings, I am,

"Yours sincerely,

"QUEENIE."

"I knowed it!" shouted Whistling Pete, striking the counter with his clinched fist till the glasses rang again.

"She's bolted. I knowed it when I seen 'em this afternoon. An' consequently, bein' as she *has* bolted, I hereby perceed to jump this yere claim. Drink up, boys, it's my shout this time."

The close intimacy existing between Inglefield and Queenie had been the subject of general comment. No one was much surprised at her flight, but every one was curious to see what effect it would have upon Hogan. It was growing dark when they saw him coming along the flat, a little ahead of his usual time. He had not felt well that day. That alarming sensation of constriction about the chest, attacks of which had been rather frequent of late, had affected him all morning, and he had left off work earlier than usual. He called at the bank on his way to Queenie's to deposit the result of the past two days' labor. "There seems to be no end to my luck," he said to the manager, in a cheery voice, as that official weighed the gold. "I struck another reef to-day, and in my original claim, too. I want to see you some time during the week. I'm thinking of floating the two claims into a company; but I must talk to my partner first and see what he thinks of it."

"Your partner was in here this morning, Mr. Hogan," said the manager, "and he sold the Eureka claim to me."

Hogan could scarcely believe his ears. "Sold the Eureka claim?" he repeated slowly, as though he had not heard aright.

"Yes, and he seemed anxious to sell, too. The claim was registered in his name; and business is business, you know, Mr. Hogan," said the manager, with an apologetic air.

"What did you advance on the claim?" asked the miner, in an agitated voice.

"Thirty-five thousand pounds."

"Thirty-five thousand pounds! and in six months it will be worth a hundred thousand."

For the first time in his life Hogan's heart was filled with anger. He was deeply hurt that his friend should have taken it upon himself to sell the reef without asking his opinion. He had discovered and developed it, and knew its value; and now the claim, which would have made a

fortune for both of them, had been foolishly sold for a third of its value. He left the bank abruptly and walked up to the hotel, filled with feelings of just resentment at the folly of his friend. As yet no thought of treachery crossed his mind.

Whistling Pete was officiating behind the bar. Hogan saw nothing extraordinary in this, as Queenie frequently asked this man to assist her, much to his own satisfaction, as his services were paid in kind. Nor did he notice the sudden silence that fell upon the crowd when he entered, or observe the curious looks with which they regarded him. "Where's my partner?" he asked, in evident perturbation.

"He went out ridin', as usual, with Miss Queenie this afternoon," said Whistling Pete.

"I want to see him as soon as he comes back; he's sold my claim—our claim; leastways, it was in his name. I had to take it in his name, but the claim was mine; though, being my partner, of course he had a half-share," Hogan blurted out in his agitation.

"Sold the Eureka claim?" asked a dozen curious voices.

"Yes, and for less than half its value."

Whistling Pete gave utterance to the long low whistle that had earned him his sobriquet. "I'm sorry for ye, Mr. Hogan," he said, with a ring of pity in his rough voice, "but brace yerself like a man, for I'm afeard there's worse news for ye;" and he handed him Queenie's note. Hogan opened it without the least suspicion of the blow that was to fall. At first he did not seem to fully comprehend the import of those hypocritical sentences, but as the heartless treachery of the faithless pair dawned upon him in all its naked truth, an ashen hue overspread his tanned and weather-beaten cheek, and all the light and life seemed crushed out of his being at a blow. The scene about him grew blurred and indistinct, a rushing noise surged within his brain, his lips moved, but they uttered no sound. A frightful feeling of suffocation oppressed him; he placed his hand on his heart and swayed to and fro like a drunken man. With a mighty effort he recovered himself. These men should not see his agony and mock at his misery and shame. He crushed the note in his hand, turned his pale

face upon the company with a ghastly smile, and then walked slowly but firmly out of the place.

"He didn't seem to take it much to heart," said Big Mike, with a grin. "If it had been me, now, I'd ha' got my horse an' rode after them, an' had a word or two to say to that young whipper-snapper of a pardner o' his'n."

"Takes it quieter than *I* expected," said several other miners.

"*Curæ leves loquunter ingentes stupent*," quoted the drunk-sodden ex-Oxonian known as Whiskey Jim.

"You're right, Jim," added Whistling Pete, who had caught the sound of the last syllables. "The gent is stoopid,—knocked *com*pletely stoopid."

And then the crowd adjourned to the bar to discuss the affair in detail over their drink. Meanwhile, Hogan walked towards his tent like a man in a dream. He lifted the flap and stepped inside. Mechanically he lighted his lamp, and stood for some minutes in the centre of the floor, passing his hand across his vacant eyes as though trying to recall something he had forgotten. Then he read the note again. Its cold tone cut him to the heart. How could she have done this shameful thing,—she whom he had believed to be so childlike and innocent, and on whose faith and purity he would have staked his very soul? And his partner, too, the man he had befriended and enriched, the man he had loved as a brother, how could he be guilty of such double-dyed treachery? He groaned in his agony of spirit. But now mingling with his keen mental anguish there came a sharper physical pain. Another of those spasms from which he had suffered at intervals during the past year came over him. His heart felt as though it were being crushed in the grip of a vice. He gasped for breath like a drowning man, beating the air with clinched hands, and then, uttering a loud cry, he fell forward with arms outstretched upon the floor.

VI.

NIGHT falls in the ranges as a man and woman pick their cautious way, on horseback, over the stony mountain track. In the recesses of a gloomy defile they hear the clatter of approaching hoofs, and a voice hails them in the darkness, "How far to Three-Mile Bend?" They cannot see the solitary horseman, but the sound of his voice agitates the woman strangely. She involuntarily spurs her horse ahead as her companion shouts in reply, "Fifteen miles, and deuced rough at that." They continue their way through narrow gorges and rocky plateaux, trusting to the instinct of their steeds, for they cannot see the track. At last they descend and reach the plain. A strip of sandy desert seventy-five miles in width lies between them and the next range in which their destination lies. But it is nothing. Did they not both cross this same strip before when they came to Three-Mile Bend? It was a safe enough journey then; they simply rode straight ahead. They do not know that this narrow strip is but the corner of a vast barren tract that extends miles upon miles to the westward; they forget that when they crossed this strip before they were under the leadership of men who knew the country; they forget that these shifting sands are constantly obliterating old landmarks and forming new ones; or, if they think of these things, they heed them not. They have but just time to catch the coastward coach at Dead-Man's Gulch. Their horses are still fresh, and they themselves feel no fatigue. They decide to ride on in the cool nighttime; it will be better to halt during the heat of the day at One-Tree Water-Hole, which is something less than halfway across. And so with the confidence born of ignorance of the perils of the bush they ride blindly onward in the darkness.

Several hours before sunrise they halt, though they have not yet reached One-Tree Water-Hole. They have travelled many miles since starting, and the horses are now in need of rest. So they hobble the hardy animals, give them a feed of corn, and lie down themselves to snatch a brief repose while the air is yet cool. When they awake the sun is high in the heavens. There is nothing in sight but

an undulating sea of sand. They look for the track. Fatuous fools, to expect to find a track in the ever-changing surface of that sandy waste.

As yet they feel no alarm. Why should they? The strip is barely seventy-five miles wide. They have only to ride straight ahead, as they did on the journey out, and they are bound to reach the water-hole, or sight the other range in an hour or two at the least. But sundown finds them in the centre of an unbroken circle of earth and sky. They camp for the night with feelings of chagrin rather than of alarm. They must reach Dead-Man's Gulch by Friday night or they will miss the coach. This thought, and not the idea of their danger, is uppermost in their minds.

At sunrise they start again. The horses have had no water for nearly forty hours, and are beginning to show signs of distress. But they must push forward. About noon the weary horses prick up their ears, sniff the air joyously, and break into a canter. A thin line of brush appears ahead, and beyond something gleams in the sand like a sheet of glass.

"Hurrah!" shouts the man. "The water-hole at last."

The horses race madly towards the water, and the pool is soon reached. To their surprise the animals instead of drinking deeply merely dip their noses into the water and turn away. The man dismounts and kneels down in the sand to take a drink himself.

"Good God! the water is as salt as brine." It is not One-Tree Water-Hole after all, but one of those salt lagoons so common in the Australian desert.

The woman grows deathly pale and trembles violently. She is the first to realize their perilous position. The man tries to reassure her, though his own confidence has left him. But they have no time to dally, there is only a quart of water left in the canvas bottles. They have evidently gone too far to the westward. If they now ride eastward they will doubtless make the hills, though too late for the coach. But sundown again finds them in the centre of an unbroken circle. They halt near a huge hummock of drifted sand. The horses are dead beat and can go no farther. They lie down, making piteous noises, and the woman sees that they

will never rise again. The travellers sleep through the night in spite of the black outlook before them. When day breaks their prospects are still gloomier: both the horses are dead. They have but a pint of water between them now, but as a forlorn hope they set out on foot to the eastward in the hope of yet making the hills. On, on they go in the blinding glare until the woman is ready to faint with heat and fatigue. Long before noon the last drop of water is gone, and still the same unbroken circle surrounds them on every side.

Another hummock of sand looms up ahead, and they hasten their faltering steps to gain a moment's respite from the oven-like heat in its friendly shade. What are those dark objects in the sand beyond? They strain their eyes. The woman utters a shriek of horror. She recognizes the bodies of their horses. They have returned to the starting-point of the morning. They have been travelling in a circle. They are "bushed."

The woman flings herself upon the man's breast and clasps his neck in a frenzy of terror, and then sinks helplessly down in the shadow of the hummock. All hope is gone now. She clasps her knees with her hands and bows her head. Her long hair falls about her shoulders as she rocks herself to and fro in the very abandonment of despair. And the burning sun shines pitilessly on, and the brown and barren waste smokes with the heat, and a silence as of death broods over the desert. Throughout that blazing afternoon and calm, starlit night they sit there motionless and silent —words are useless now—and await the end.

Yet another day breaks,—a day of mental and physical torture. During the burning hours that seem unending they lie panting in the small area of shade, their bodies racked by the agonies of thirst. The cool air of evening brings no relief; wild-eyed and haggard, they pass another night in sleepless horror. They dread the torments of the coming day. Once more morning dawns upon the desert and finds them both alive. All that day the woman leans helplessly back against the hummock of sand. Her strength is spent; her tongue cleaves to her palate, and she cannot speak. She sits with eyes fixed upon the hazy horizon in hopeless vacancy. The sun is yet high in the heavens when

she turns feebly towards the man ; a look of piteous agony is in her haggard eyes ; she clutches his hand convulsively, and with a faint gurgling moan leans back in his arms to die. The man, too, suffers frightfully, but his stronger organization dooms him to agonies more prolonged. He lays the dead body down, and rising to his feet shades his eyes with his hands, and scans the wide circumference for some faint sign of hope. Poor wretch ! The shipwrecked sailor adrift on the pathless ocean has a better chance of rescue than he. He gazes hopelessly at the huge coppery disk of the setting sun as it slowly sinks below the level of the plain. He knows that he will never see it again. Darkness deepens over the wide expanse, and the man flings himself face downward upon the earth and prays for death until fitful slumber steals over his wearied senses. Throughout the night he tosses and turns in his troubled sleep, oppressed with a hideous nightmare. Grim goblin forms—creatures of his fevered brain—hover about his sandy pillow, and menace and mock and taunt with frightful gestures. An hour before sunrise he awakes from the ghastly phantasm with a shuddering shriek, and awaits in dumb despair the dawning of his last day of life. Anon the sun leaps above the edge of the desert, and the day begins. Higher and higher mounts the blazing orb ; hotter and hotter grows the air. The man lies gasping in the sand like a hunted animal, and his swollen tongue vainly licks his dry and blackened lips for relief from the torment of thirst. But lo ! a gentle breeze arises, and a tiny cloud appears in the west. A mighty wave of hope surges up in the heart of the man. The breeze and the cloud may bring rain, and if they should he has yet a chance for life. He kneels down in the powdery sand, his hands uplifted in an agony of supplication. But alas for his hopes ; the fitful breeze dies down, the cloud of promise fades away. He shakes his clinched fist at the brazen sky, and curses his Maker and the mother that bore him in his torment. He feels for his revolver ; it is not there. Instead, his hands encounter a wallet which contains a huge nugget of gold. He flings it from him. Curses on the gold, the glittering dross cannot purchase a drop of water to assuage his burning thirst. He sits down beside the dead in a semi-stupor ; he takes the cold hand

in his, and tenderly strokes the long yellow tresses. Low mutterings escape his parched lips; the light of a merciful madness is in his eyes.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughs; "won't they be surprised to see us? Scapegrace Charlie they used to call me; but now we have thousands, they'll welcome us. What a joke it is! Hurrah for the magic power of gold, gold, gold! Who says it is not ours? It *is* ours; it is mine; the claim is mine, and we shall have horses and carriages, and a villa at Toorak; and I tell you we'll live a right royal life." And then his delirious fancy takes another turn. He is in Melbourne surrounded by a jovial crowd of boon companions. "Fill up, boys, it's my shout! Here, waiter, bring us champagne; we'll have a night of it, for I've got the dust! See here! isn't that a beauty? That nugget weighs three pounds if it's an ounce, and I know where there's lots of them,—lots of them. There's thousands—millions in my claim. You've only to scratch the soil and nuggets are there for the gathering. And there's quartz too in the ranges. But drink up, fellows, your glasses are empty; let us make a jolly night of it." And the poor wretch seizes an imaginary bottle and pours out a barmecidal bumper, and goes through the motion of drinking with an air of ghastly hilarity. 'Tis but the beginning of the end. These wild ravings soon die away into disconnected mutterings, and finally cease. The sitting posture becomes a recumbent one; the breath comes in stertorous gasps; the lack-lustre eyes gaze upward to the sky with a filmy stare, and soon Silence and Death reign over all.

And the ghoulish beetle bids his comrades to the feast ere it is too late. For the rains will come and the flesh will wither and rot away, and nothing will remain but a heap of whitened bones to mark another episode of the bush.

* * * * * * * *

Shortly after sunrise on the morning after Queenie's flight a solitary horseman rode into Three-Mile Bend. In front of a large shanty, above the door of which he read "Queen of the Ranges Hotel," a crowd of men were standing. He addressed himself to them. "Can any of you tell me," he said, after the usual salutations had been

exchanged, "if there is a woman in this camp of the name of Hillington,—Alice Hillington?"

"No, there's no Hillington. There's a Hilton, wife of Tom Hilton as keeps the 'Miners' Rest' up the creek," said a man who appeared to be a leader in the party, and whom the others called Pete.

The new-comer's face fell. "Stop a bit. What an ass I am! Of course she would change her name," he said; "but perhaps this will help you. Here's her photograph."

"Why, it's Queenie!" said the man called Pete. "Is she anythin' to you, stranger?" he asked, in a curious voice.

"She's my wife," said the new-comer, laconically.

"Sorry for you, then," replied the man called Pete. "She bolted last night with a young feller by name o' Inglefield, an' she bein' engaged to Dick Hogan, the luckiest cuss in the diggins', too."

"Then, by G—d, I passed them both last night not twenty miles from here. It was dark and I could not see her features," said the stranger, with a furious oath.

"Well, that *is* kinder rilin'," said the man called Pete, with a sympathetic inflection.

"I should think so," the young man said, hotly. "Listen. When I knew that woman first she was an actress in New Zealand. I was a lawyer in good practice in Dunedin, but she bewitched me—curse her!—with her innocent face and siren beauty, and I married her. She nearly ruined me in a year with her extravagances; and then, when I lay sick with brain fever, she ran away with a squatter from Otago. When I recovered I could find no clue to her whereabouts, though I afterwards met and shot the squatter. But that's neither here nor there. At last, however, I traced her to Sydney, where I learned she had kept a bar in the Metropole. They told me there that she had gone to the diggings on the Roper, and I followed her here only to miss her."

"An' ye can't catch them now," said the man called Pete. "Yer hoss is dead lame, an' they'll catch the Saturday mornin' coach, an' there ain't another for a fortnit." Then the man called Pete proceeded to tell Queenie's doings in the camp with such fanciful exaggerations as his exuberant imagination suggested.

"It's rather hard on this poor devil Hogan, if he was as 'gone' on her as you say," said Hillington when the miner called Pete had finished. "But he'll thank his stars things have turned out as they have when he learns what she is. She would have made ducks and drakes of his money in no time. Where's his tent? He's probably feeling sore over it, and I'll go and ease his mind a bit."

"It's away round the bend, furthest tent on the flat, a mile from the edge o' the camp," said the man called Pete.

Having received these directions, Hillington turned his horse's head and rode slowly down the creek. When he rounded the bend he saw the solitary tent on the flat. He reached it, dismounted, raised the flap, and looked in. A man with his arms outstretched lay prone upon the floor, and Hillington saw that he was dead. He raised the corpse and laid it on the narrow pallet, and took the siren's note from its stiffened fingers. "Poor old chap," he said, compassionately, as he looked down at the rugged features, on which a look of agony still lingered. "Poor old chap. Well, it's an ill wind that blows no one any good; and if she killed you, your death has brought wealth to me." And he went out and jumped the dead man's claim.

THE LOST PINE MINE.

I HAVE just received a letter from my agent offering me a safe investment,—a cool thousand if I buy and sell within a month,—twenty shares of the "Lost Pine Mining Company,—Limited."

Mines are risky investments at best. Millions are made in them every year, but more lost. I have never yet been on the winning side. Before writing "buy" I shall reflect.

What says the Prospectus?

"Heavy silver-bearing lode,—surface exposure, one hundred feet by twelve,—vertical, developing side pockets, —numerous branches——"

Where is the phenomenon?

"Santa Catalina Mountains, Pima County, Arizona. Agent B. N., Tucson."

A familiar locality! I'll bet that agent a hat I can give him points on the "Lost Pine Mine." Haven't I trailed that country from Dan to Beersheba in the days gone by?

How? Where? When?

In the days of my first service,—four years between the Gila and the northern Mexican border,—know every water-hole and every patch of bunch-grass between Nogales and the Gila Range. It was in the beginning—in the days of fresh commencements—that I made the acquaintance of that mine. It is the same,—the "Lost Pine Mine." It never had a name until the day we met. By me it began to wear the dignity of a name. By it I began to get knowledge and understanding of mines. We are old friends. To-day it is a certainty of the business world. Surely out of the beginning groweth the end. That mine has prospered from the start.

And this is the history of the beginning.

Less than a year previous I had run the gauntlet of the terribly learned Medical Examining Board of the army, and had been admitted to the rank and dignity of first lieutenant and assistant surgeon. When I placed my first

order for uniforms with Hatfield, and ran up a bill for trimmings with Ridabock, I felt more valuable than a ton of twenty-four-carat gold, and more dignified than a Hindoo god with a diamond eye. I was a star of the first magnitude. If an acquaintance failed to congratulate me upon these hard-won honors, I put his omission down to malice, and cut him off my list. Out of twenty-two aspirants I had been the only one accepted by the board. The only one who possessed the requisite learning and ability—I thought. The only one who happened to know just what the board happened to ask—it afterwards appeared. I thought myself an unusually gifted scholar, certain to add wonders to medical science in the army. Every one else thought I was an ass. But that was in the days of bursting shells and pin-feathers.

My first orders lifted me away from scenes of intellectual triumphs and dropped me into those of physical failures,—with a cavalry battalion in the cactus-beds near the Mexican line, somewhere south of Tombstone. The drop was flattening. From Central Park, a silk hat, tan kids, and white gaiters, to the heart of an alkali desert, the back of a quartermaster's mule, and the nightly shelter of a saddle-blanket. A month before I would have fainted at the sight of myself. "Trousers, mounted, made heavy,—boots, heavy, hand-sewed,—hat, campaign, drab," was the description the salient points of my field uniform bore on the quartermaster's returns. The ensuing grief shook the scales from my eyes.

It was necessary for me to learn something without delay, and in Arizona information is not acquired without poverty and earnest purpose, two things I knew not of. Urged by the sustaining spur of good resolutions, I rose betimes, and, cinching my mule by the light of the morning sun, rode forth into the chaparral to slay bush-rabbits with my six-shooter and flatter the vanity of the ranchmen by asking questions. They taught me to follow a moccasin trail, throw a lasso, and make the diamond hitch over the back of a fractious mule. There was little I could teach them, for the sturdy fellows rarely fell ill with a more serious ailment than delirium tremens.

The novelty of their habits and manners, and a desire to

acquire the mysteries of plainscraft, were the attractions which drew me to them at first, but as their better acquaintance with me rendered them more approachable, I discovered a rugged honesty and sincere hospitality, which, added to their reckless bravado, gave their ways an irresistible charm. I sought their friendship, and went among them whenever it was possible to leave camp.

It happened that during the annual beef "round-up" I rode over and passed the night with my acquaintances. The following morning there occurred in the camp what the New York *Herald* would head-line as "Murder—Deliberate Assassination—The Shooting of a Mexican by Cow-boys." The Tombstone *Blade* referred incidentally to the affair as a "Heated altercation between Messrs. Q. and R., of the X-Bar Cattle Company, and a Mexican named Manrico, which resulted fatally to the latter."

Being law-abiding citizens, Messrs. Q. and R. delivered themselves over to the sheriff for trial. I was named as a witness for the defence, and served with summons to appear in court the following day to give my testimony.

The accused, the other witnesses for the defence,—there were none for the prosecution,—and myself rode over next morning, reaching the low adobe building which served as county house about noon. We found the judge seated behind his pine-slab table in his shirt-sleeves, with his feet on a copy of Walker's "American Law," engaged in target practice, the bull's-eye being a retired herring-box partially filled with saw-dust that stood in one corner of the room. After several minutes of silent rumination he would launch the results with unerring certainty at the herring-box. The aim of life in Arizona is to hit something.

The clerk of the court was there, also the attorney for the prosecution. All wore six-shooters, and the judge had a Winchester rifle standing handy for the punishment of contempts of court. When a few of the jury had assembled we took seats. The judge smote the herring-box again, rapped with his heel on the table, and opened the trial.

"This yer court's in session. Perceed, Mr. Attorney."

The prosecution arose and stated apologetically that he had no witnesses to examine, as the complainant had named

none, being deceased, for which good reason all of the evidence must be adduced from the witnesses on the part of the defence. Mr. Q., otherwise known as Pecos Bill, conducted his own defence. By the time I reached the stand the absent members of the jury had arrived. All wore one or more six-shooters.

In New York the courts do not sit in weapons. Not being informed of the Arizona custom, I had left all of mine at the camp. It was evident that the jury regarded me with a contempt which deepened into disgust when the evidence I gave appeared to favor the prosecution. I had seen the Mexican shot in the back, which fact would lead to the necessary conclusion that the shooter was behind him. I made that statement, and there was a chorus of groans from the jury.

Pecos Bill rose scornfully, and planting his right foot firmly, turned his body so as to place his left back where his right breast had been.

"There," said he, "don't you see how a man standing in front of me could shoot and hit me in the back?"

I had to confess that the feat was possible. Pecos Bill triumphantly resumed his seat and turned upon me a look of pity, which meant that I was "a deal greener" than he ever supposed. The jury remarked facetiously among themselves that nobody but a freak or a lunatic ever travelled without a "gun." The judge suggested that possibly I was "con compis mentis."

It was evident that Pecos Bill had friends in that jury with whom I was unacquainted, unto whom it would have to be made pretty clear that my prejudicial evidence had not been given with malice prepense, before it would be safe to meet them out of court. I wished more than ever I had stayed in my tent and read novels before going near that cursed "round-up." "Mr. Potter of Texas" at the third reading was preferable to a murder trial in Arizona without a gun. Shakespeare wrote, "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just." Shakespeare had never been in Arizona.

However, in due course of law the case was concluded and the jury charged. They lost no time in returning a verdict of justifiable homicide. Pecos Bill celebrated his release from custody by leading the crowd, judge, bar, and

jury, over to the licensed liquor-house presided over by one Honest Organ, a retired Methodist minister, noted as being the greatest single-handed liar in the Territory,—and there we irrigated. After many assurances that my mistakes had been misinterpreted, and that there was no ill will, I was permitted to mount and set out for camp. Even my mule trotted out briskly with the joy of getting away.

Fancy, oh, gentle rider of Central Park, with your smoothly-galloping chestnut bay, and your Whitman saddle,—and you, fearless rough rider of the Rosetree Hunt, chasing foxes for pleasure,—how you would feel mounted on the back of a string-halt quartermaster's mule in a desert of chaparral, with thirty miles and sundown, and Heaven only knows what else, between you and supper! There are moments when the problems of equitation present no inspiring features. My progress that afternoon was blighted by such moments. Alone in Arizona without a "gun," and no knowing how many offended citizens abroad in the neighborhood! Better be in mid-ocean without a rudder.

As I jogged along, watching the reddening sun drop lower in the heavens, the silence and loneliness became oppressive. Every bush-rabbit that crossed the trail gave me a start. The possibilities of the desert multiplied in my mind. Any wayfaring desperado I met could lay me low and drag my body out among the bushes, where the coyotes would prepare my bones for later discovery, and the label, in some dime museum, "Traveller overcome with thirst in the desert." Geronimo's entire band might be sojourning on that very trail between me and the camp. An elegant evening's entertaiment I would furnish them!

Towards sunset I approached a deep coulée that crossed the trail. Looking ahead into the gathering dusk, I saw two ponies lariated among the mesquite bushes. The saddles appeared to be of the Indian pattern, but there were no riders anywhere in sight. My first thought was to put about and retreat, but that was useless, for either pony was a far better mount than my mule. It would be wiser to keep straight ahead on the trail and trust to finding "friendlies,"—White Mountains or Pimas.

As I approached the ponies a tall white man sauntered out of the bushes and planted himself squarely in my path.

He wore the wide-rimmed hat, dirty blue overalls, and greasy buckskin shirt of a miner, and most prominently a scraggy, sandy beard, which, after radiating in all directions from his head, fell half-way to his waist. He concluded the movement by thrusting the butt of his Winchester rifle between his toes and holding up his left hand.

"Pause, stranger," he said, quietly.

Pausing was right in my line. I wouldn't have refused his request for half the Territory in fee-simple. I paused and said, "Good-evening."

"Light," he said. I lit.

Without altering his position he looked me over from head to foot. Then turning his beady eyes full into mine, and wrinkling his shaggy eyebrows, he inquired,—

"You air that medico from the soldier camp? Thought likely you might pass this way." He turned and beckoned me to follow him into the chaparral.

I answered "Yes," and walked after him, feeling like a doomed convict on his way to the cart. Surely the hour had come.

We entered an open space in the centre of which was the figure of a man reclining upon a blanket.

"Pard," said my captor, addressing the figure, "I hev brought you the medico." Then turning to me he added, "Pard an' me hed a dispute about who owned the mine, an' I winged pard."

Joy of the thought! My professional skill was required. The other fellow was to be the victim, not me. I might leave my revolver behind, but my pocket surgical case, never.

"What can I do for you, my friend?" I asked, bending over him. The right arm was bound up with a red bandana handkerchief, and blood was oozing out.

"You might patch up that hole Tonto bored in me," he answered, feebly. "He got to rarin' aroun' here like hell beatin' tan-bark, all out of my claimin' the mine. When he swore he would never let me own that mine alive it riled me, an' I war goin' to make medicine weth him, but Tonto air double-geared—easy, doc, it air very techy—double-geared lightenin' on pullin' trigger, an' he winged me 'fore I could git my gun levil. I reckin the mine's his."

"Which will teach ye hereafter to respect the wishes of an honest pardner," observed the master of the situation, sententiously.

"It air a ticklish thing to shoot a man's ole pardner," continued the afflicted, as I went on with my surgery. "Me an' Tonto's been prospectin' together for nigh five year wethout onct fallin' out. I finds a mine an' digs till I thinks it ain't no use diggin' no more, an' gives up, advisin' Tonto to do the same, an' pull stakes an' move further up the creek. Tonto won't leave it, digs deeper an' deeper an' strikes ore. Thet's why he thinks he orter hev that mine o' mine, jest as if he finds it himself. It 'pears to me it makes no difference who works in a mine,—the man ez finds it owns it. How do it 'pear to you, doc?"

In a country where weapons only carry weight I preferred to defer my opinion. "That depends," I answered.

"You see, doc," he went on, holding out his arm while I bound it up. "I finds that mine twict. When we first struck her, there war a tall pine-tree standin' up on the edge of the gulch right over the lead, an' it wa'n't no trouble to find the mine by thet pine-tree. But while we war gone down to Tombstone to git grub the wind blew thet tree clean out by the roots, an' it war the devil's own game to find the place ag'in. Thet's how we come to call it the 'Lost Pine Mine.' I clumb up out of the gulch an' walked along till I struck thet tree lyin' flat on the mesa, an' thet's how I found it ag'in."

The bullet from Tonto's revolver had passed through the fleshy part of the forearm without striking any bones. I washed the wound with the water remaining in my canteen, and bound it up in my own handkerchief, tying the old one around it. Without bandages and antiseptics that was the best that could be done.

"You will have to go to the camp with me," I said. "I can do no more for you here."

The stately and silent Tonto interposed. "Wait till we hev done weth the mine, medico," he observed, in measured tones. "I am no pard to a man ez doesn't respect my rights. Thet mine wouldn't never hev bin found ef it hedn't bin fur me, an' ef pard sez thet mine's his, he lays here till he rots fur all the good Tonto Bill 'll be to him

ag'in. I don't shoot no man an' make up weth him onless there's prospect of his comin' to reason. Ef pard says the mine's mine, I'm willin' to stick weth him till the crack o' doom, an' we'll work it together. There ain't no use in a man's bein' onreasonable. What say, pard?"

"I think ye hold an ace full, Tonto. I ain't no man to dispute the rights of my ole pardner."

"Why don't you sell out your interest?" I suggested. "That will be more like business."

"Sell my interest! I be durned. How much'll you give, Tonto?"

"Dollar an' a drink of whiskey," chuckled Tonto, out of his beard.

"Whar's the whiskey?"

"Plenty at Honest Organ's. Here's the dollar."

"Goin', goin', gone! Sold to Tonto Bill fur a dollar an' a drink of whiskey,—all my interest in the Lost Pine Mine, —me, Ephraim Carter, known to most people ez Prospect Pete,—so help me Bob! Now air you satisfied, Tonto?"

"Ez fur ez it goes," answered Tonto, sitting cross-legged, and drawing from his pocket a dirty yellow envelope; "but I think we'll put the deal in writin'." He spread the envelope on his boot-top, and wrote painfully with the stub of a pencil,—

"i eferam carter this day sell & make over to William Johnson all my stock & profits in The lost pine Mine, fur a dollar & a drink of whiskey."

"Make yer mark, Pete," said Tonto, passing over the paper. Ephraim Carter took the pencil in his left hand and made a cross under the writing.

"What do it say, doc?" he asked. I read the writing.

"Now, medico, ye kin spread yer fist on thet document by way of witnessin' the proceedin'." Tonto gave me the envelope, and I wrote my name. Then he folded it carefully and placed it in the inside pocket of his shirt. Leaning over he grasped Pete by the left hand.

"Shake, Pete! Now ye kin bet on Tonto Bill fur yer pard fur better er worse, fire an' brimstone an' blood, fur-ever. Ye'll work thet mine weth me half an' half, even up, an' now she's mine they can't be no more disputes."

Prospect Pete gurgled softly, bending over the proffered

hand. "What a queer way to treat a pard!" he murmured in a thin voice. "I said it was dirt cheap, but a mine ain't nothin' but dirt nohow till it's worked. An' now ye give me half! Bill, ye war always a brother to me, in spite of my rantankerous ways. I'll never dispute ye ag'in. Never. So help me!"

His bearded pard helped him to his feet and assisted him tenderly to the back of the pony. "Do ye feel fit?" he asked.

"Fit enough," answered Pete.

The purple twilight deepened into night as we crept slowly along the trail leading to the camp in the foot-hills. The wounded arm forbade a gait faster than a walk. The partners of the "Lost Pine Mine" were absorbed in their own meditations. No sound except the far-off wail of coyotes and the shuffle of the animals' hoofs on the trail broke the stillness until the sentinel challenged us at the camp, and there, dismounting my patient at the hospital tent, I placed the arm on the road to recovery.

Until to-day, since the twain jogged out of the camp side by side the morning following our strange meeting, I have not thought of the "Lost Pine Mine." Now it all comes back, and I write it as I remember it. The partners never crossed my path again. I witnessed the transfer of a drink of whiskey which I can never take oath was transferred. If Honest Organ says it wasn't I shall know it was.

For the sake of the "pards" and those early beginnings I shall write to my agent,—

"Buy."

PRIVATE JONES OF THE EIGHTH; OR, A MILITARY MÉSALLIANCE.

I.

A VERY dingy flag, hanging out of a very dingy window, in a very dingy street, of a certain dingy city, indicated to all whom it might concern the *locale* of a United States army recruiting rendezvous. It was an hour before the time when the recruiting officer usually made his appearance, and a very elongated corporal in a decided state of undress was leaning out of an upper window gazing up and down the street with an air of profound contempt for all things sublunary. He had been engaged in this arduous occupation perhaps half an hour when a tall, fine-looking young man crossed over from the opposite side of the street and entered the office below without pausing to read certain alluring statements pasted on a board at the door, setting forth the advantages of a soldier's life in the United States service. This circumstance having fallen within the observation of the elongated corporal, that attenuated individual withdrew his upper extremities into the room, and proceeded to complete his toilet with the expression of a man utterly harassed out with the cares and responsibilities of life. Then having satisfied himself as to his personal appearance, as reflected from a variety of stand-points in a cracked mirror at the end of the room, he extracted a plug of tobacco and a pipe from the pocket of a coat behind the door, and slowly descended the stairs, whistling that cheerful and popular air known as "Johnny, get your gun." In the office below he found awaiting him the tall young man, who immediately said, "Can I enlist at this office for the United States army?" The elongated corporal, who was a man of great deliberation, evidently did not think that this question called for any immediate reply, for he leisurely began to fill his pipe, and when that delicate operation had been completed to his entire satisfaction, he condescended

to drawl laconically, "If you want infantry, you can; if you want cavalry, you can't." Then, apparently satisfied that no further information could possibly be required of him, he spat in the fire, lit his pipe, tilted his forage-cap on the back of his head, and gazed critically, with his head on one side, at the tall young man through dense volumes of smoke. "It is immaterial to me whether I go to cavalry or infantry," said the tall young man. "I simply wish to know whether I can enlist here, and at what time." By way of reply the elongated corporal stepped out into the gloomy passage-way, opened a door, and bawled "Tom!" at the top of his voice. "All right!" came a gruff response from somewhere in the back premises, and shortly afterwards a heavy tread announced the approach of "Tom," who turned out to be the recruiting sergeant. The sergeant was a short, fat man, with a hoarse voice and a cadaverous aspect. His eye had the appearance of the visual orb of a boiled cod-fish; his cheeks were pendulous and flabby, and his face wore an expression of habitual exasperation. "Well?" said he, interrogatively and irritably, as he entered the office. The elongated corporal did not vouchsafe an oral reply; he slowly withdrew the pipe from his mouth, expectorated several times with extraordinary precision into a spittoon at the far end of the room, and jerked his left thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the tall young man.

"And what in thunder do you want?" said the fat sergeant, in a most irascible tone, when he beheld the applicant for enlistment.

"I wish to enlist in the United States service," answered the tall young man.

"Then why the devil don't you come at the proper time?" said the sergeant. "Do you think we are going to get breakfast before daylight to please you fellows? No, not by a —— sight."

The tall young man replied to the effect that, as it was close upon ten o'clock when he came in, he felt justified in assuming that the business of the day had begun.

"You've no right to think anything about it," growled the sergeant, with a terrific scowl, seating himself at a desk and viciously grabbing a paper from a pigeon-hole on his

right. "Come here and answer these questions." He unrolled as he spoke the form of questions which every applicant for enlistment is required to answer; but before asking any of these he winked at the elongated corporal, as much as to say, "Now pay attention and you'll have some fun," and proceeded to frame a few on his own account, with a view to the embarrassment of the recruit and the exhibition of his own facetiousness.

But he had reckoned without his host, for the tall young man kept remarkably cool, and met all these impertinent queries with some caustic and ready reply, to the great discomfiture of the sergeant and the intense delight of the elongated corporal, who chuckled gleefully at the turn affairs were taking, and nearly asphyxiated himself in his efforts to suppress his hilarity and maintain his countenance in a state of befitting solemnity. The sergeant thereupon became savage, and began to ask the questions from the recruiting-paper with the air of a bullying attorney browbeating a witness. During this catechetical examination he several times returned to a question previously asked, as though he suspected the recruit of prevarication and wished to convict him of mendacity by entangling him in some contradictory statement. He took a particular delight in repeating the question, "Have you any one dependent on you for support?" and seemed to regard a negative reply with such evident incredulity as to cause the recruit to think there must be a prevailing impression in the sergeant's mind that he was the sole support and stay of a large number of indigent relatives, and had come into the army for the express purpose of providing for their maintenance out of his pay of thirteen dollars a month.

Just as this document was completed a gentleman entered the room, whereupon the elongated corporal, who had been lounging listlessly against the mantel-piece, called "'Ten-*shun!*" in a sepulchral tone, glared fixedly at an imaginary spot in the opposite wall, and assumed an attitude of such extreme rigidity as to give rise to a doubt whether his spinal column would ever regain its flexibility. From these indications the recruit concluded that he was in the presence of the recruiting officer, as indeed he was. The savage sergeant's insolence of manner vanished instanter, and gave

place to an obsequious deference as he brought the recruit before the officer, who asked the tall young man a few pertinent questions, and then ordered him to strip for his physical examination. This examination proved the tall young man to be a fine specimen of athletic manhood. He stood fully six feet high, and tipped the scale at one hundred-and eighty-five pounds. His figure was erect and soldierly, his frame well knit and muscular, and his general appearance was so far above the average that he passed the ordeal without the slightest difficulty. Half an hour later he signed his enlistment papers and his name was duly entered in the recruiting-book as "Private Thomas Jones, G. S. R. U. S. Army," with many additional particulars.

This business having been concluded, the officer retired to his private room, and the elongated corporal, interposing a door between himself and the fat sergeant, made a pantomimic show of emptying a great number of glasses, jerked his thumb in the direction of the street, and beckoned the recruit into the passage. He then piloted the way to a neighboring saloon with a degree of alacrity quite surprising in view of his previous deliberation; such, indeed, was his precipitance that he had called for "two beers" before he discovered "that he hadn't got no change." The tall young man laughed at this transparent stratagem, and tendered a five-dollar bill in payment for the beer, at the same time calling for a further supply, for the elongated corporal had emptied his first glass at a gulp, remarking, with a redundancy of negatives, "that he never allowed no beer to get stale nohow,"—a principle he again proceeded to act upon by immediately emptying his second. Under the cheerful influence of the beer his previous taciturnity gave place to a convivial mood, induced possibly by the hope that the remains of the five-dollar bill would be converted into more liquor. In that belief he entered upon a monologue eulogistic of the tall young man, the disinterestedness of which was open to considerable question, as it concluded with a request to be accommodated with the loan of fifty cents, which was granted with such unexpected readiness that he was induced to repeat the operation later on to the extent of a dollar. The tall young man then

returned to the office, where he donned a blue uniform in place of his "mufti," and was told by the fat sergeant to hold himself in readiness to proceed, with three other recruits, to the receiving depot, for which destination he left at seven o'clock that evening in charge of the elongated and, by that time, semi-inebriated corporal.*

II.

IT was muster-day at Fort Buell, head-quarters of the Eighth United States Artillery. First call had sounded all round the garrison, and groups of soldiers were gathered in front of their respective quarters, the more nervous and diffident among them going through the manual of arms, making the most of this last opportunity of practice to insure precision at the crucial moment in the approaching ordeal, while others, more confident in their knowledge of tactics, lounged carelessly about, interchanging harmless and frequently pointless witticisms with their comrades in the other batteries. Midway between the barracks and "officers' row" stood knots of officers discussing garrison or regimental matters until the sounding of assembly, and on the far side of the parade-ground could be seen the portly form of the commanding officer, Colonel Colchicum, resplendent in gold cord and flowing scarlet plume, stalking to and fro on the porch in front of his quarters. Colonel Colchicum was a large man with a fierce look and a very imposing manner. He prided himself on being a martinet, but in spite of his rigid exaction of all the details of military discipline he was not disliked by the men, who, while admitting his severity, nevertheless recognized his justice and impartiality. Moreover, there was a prevailing idea among them that his "bark was worse than his bite," that his acerbity of manner was not the natural bent of his disposition, but had been superinduced by a long course of feminine tyranny at home; for it was an open secret in the

* This is a record of an actual enlistment.

garrison that in his quarters the awe-inspiring colonel, whose tremendous frown sent the heart into the boots of the luckless soldier who hoped to pass muster with a "kit" out of keeping with the standard of inspection requirements, was mild and docile as a lamb, and lived in a state of abject subjection to a stringent code of petticoat government as formulated by Mrs. Colchicum, a very small woman with a very loud voice. The men were wont to gauge, and pretty accurately, too, the measure of the colonel's domestic infelicities by his manner at inspections and parades, and the circumstance of having to march past at the double several times was usually accepted as an indication that he had been visited with the infliction of a more than ordinarily lengthy curtain lecture, the exercise of any undue severity being simply regarded as an outlet for those feelings of exasperation he dared not give vent to at home. But when assembly sounded and the colonel took his post, the men noted with inward satisfaction that his face wore an unusually cheerful expression, which was significant of a cessation of hostilities at domestic head-quarters, and a favorable augury for an easy inspection. But if the colonel was in a good humor, Captain Hardtack, commanding Battery A, was not; indeed, as a matter of fact, he very seldom was. Captain Hardtack was a type of officer now happily rare in the service. He was harsh, captious, and exacting with his men in line of duty, and even in their leisure time subjected them to a system of petty surveillance with a view to making their personal habits a ground of complaint in case they should afterwards be guilty of any trivial dereliction of military duty. The men could have borne without a murmur with the mere exaction of disciplinary requirements, however severe, but the captain's puerile treatment exasperated them beyond endurance, with the result that several of the best soldiers among them deserted. The battery lost its *esprit de corps*, and became a mere gathering of pusillanimous spirits who trembled with timid embarrassment in the captain's hated presence. The men did their duty perfunctorily and without the slightest show of zeal, happy if they passed through the day without having incurred some scathing reprimand or suffered the curtailment of some little privilege. Matters were in this condi-

tion when Private Jones was assigned to the battery. In our journey through life we not infrequently meet with individuals for whom, without exactly knowing why, we conceive a strong feeling of aversion. When Private Jones, on the morning of his arrival at Fort Buell, reported at the orderly-room, he at first sight experienced an instinctive dislike for Captain Hardtack. This dislike was mutual (for even officers condescend at times to entertain personal antipathies to enlisted men), and as the days went by Captain Hardtack felt that he hated the keen-eyed, handsome private soldier whose calm self-possession nothing seemed to disturb, although he might have been at a loss to find a reason for his antipathetic sentiments had he been called upon to give one. On this particular muster he was more than usually captious, and in his preliminary inspection before the march past in review found fault with his men, collectively and individually, emptying out the vials of his wrath upon the head of Private Jones, from the sleeve of whose dress-coat a button was missing. And the captain made full use of this opportunity for the display of his vituperative powers. The soldier that he disliked had never before given him the slightest occasion for a reprimand, for during the year Private Jones had been in the battery he had proved himself to be a soldier in every sense of the word. He was clean, precise, and intelligent, cardinal virtues in military life, and turned out at guard-mount with such spotless attire and highly-polished accoutrements that the adjutant, who had a nice appreciation of soldierly qualities, invariably selected him for the coveted position of orderly. With his comrades Private Jones was a general favorite. They were not long in discovering that he was a man of superior talent and education, and his opinion and assistance were frequently sought in the settlement of many little company arguments. He was generous almost to a fault with his money, of which he apparently obtained a regular supply from some mysterious source irrespective of his pay, a circumstance which gave a show of color to the rumor that he was the scapegrace son of some wealthy man, to say nothing of various other speculations as to his social status prior to his enlistment. But the curious were obliged to content themselves with mere surmise, for Private Jones

was remarkably reticent in regard to his previous history, and politely, but with unmistakable firmness, repelled all attempts to draw him into conversation on the subject. At any rate, the fact remained that Private Jones always had money, and, from a soldier's point of view, plenty of it, and he spent it with a freedom remarkable even for a soldier, and with a recklessness that would almost have satisfied a sailor. It was a matter of considerable surprise to the other officers in the garrison, who had long since recognized in Private Jones a remarkably fine-looking and intelligent soldier, that he had not been promoted to a corporalship. The reason advanced by Captain Hardtack for ignoring qualifications which were patent to everybody was that Private Jones had the reputation of being a heavy drinker. In order that it may not be inferred from this that Captain Hardtack was an advocate of the principle of total abstinence, it may be stated that the frequent delivery of spirit-cases at his quarters afforded some ground for believing that he held opinions to the contrary of a very unequivocal character. But if Private Jones drank a great deal, there was evidently a method in his drinking, for he was never known to neglect his duty on that account; nor did he seem to suffer from those macrocephalous sensations which usually follow an inordinate indulgence in alcoholic liquors, nor had he ever appeared upon the battery sick report as a sufferer from "acute alcoholism," a frequent and, it may be added, very accurate diagnosis of a great number of cases in the monthly return of patients at the post hospital; for Major Probang, the post surgeon, had been too long in the service to be deceived by fictitious ailments, as many an over-night canteen-reveller who tried to "beat the sick report" with a supposititious "cold in the head" found to his cost. But at last there arose a vacancy when Private Jones's merits could not well be ignored, however, for there was absolutely no other man in the battery capable of filling the position. Private Jones was accordingly sent for to the orderly-room, when Captain Hardtack, with an air of great condescension, said to him, "Jones, there is a corporalship vacant in the battery, and I have decided to make you a non-commissioned officer."

"With your permission, sir," said Private Jones, "I

respectfully wish to say that I have no desire for promotion and would prefer to remain a private."

"Your preferences will not be consulted," said the captain, angrily. "I intend to promote you."

"In that event, sir, I have only to ask you to consider my resignation of the position," replied Private Jones, respectfully.

"Not unless you can give me good and sufficient reasons," said the captain.

"I have my reasons, sir," said Private Jones.

"State them," commanded the captain.

"In the first place, sir," said Private Jones, "the difference between the pay of a private and that of a non-commissioned officer is so small as to be beneath consideration. Secondly, as no examination is required to determine a soldier's fitness for promotion, that promotion cannot be regarded as a recognition of qualifications superior to those of the ordinary rank and file. It would seem rather to depend upon the mere negative recommendation of having done nothing 'to the prejudice of good order and military discipline' during the term of service as a private, or upon the whim or caprice of the battery commander. Thirdly, the non-commissioned officer has no especial privileges. He messes and sleeps with the men; consequently his interests and associations are, in a great measure, identical with theirs. Under these circumstances it is not to be expected that much dignity or authority can attach to the office. Fourthly, it not infrequently happens that a raw recruit, with perhaps no more than three months' service, is given some extra-duty position in one of the staff departments, and is thereby enabled to draw more pay than the regimental sergeant-major, which seems to me such an extraordinary——"

"That will do," said the captain, with an unsuccessful attempt at an assumption of supreme indifference; "I did not ask you for any comments upon the Army Regulations. Go to your quarters; you will not be promoted." And thus it fell out that Private Jones remained Private Jones to the end of the chapter.

III.

Now it came to pass about this time that Captain Hardtack decided to take unto himself a wife, and

> "Indulge in the felicity
> Of unbounded domesticity."

There was quite a bevy of marriageable young ladies in the post, each of whom possessed more or less pretensions to good looks. They greatly exceeded in number the eligible male *partis*, and as the garrison was comparatively isolated, and the circle of acquaintance necessarily limited, any one of them would doubtless have been glad to secure Captain Hardtack as a partner for life. The gallant captain knew this, but his mind was in a woful state of indecision caused by such an amplitude of choice. After a long period of deliberation, wherein he duly weighed the *pros* and *cons* of a union with each individual young lady, he came at last to the conclusion that he could not do better than confer his hand and heart upon the colonel's daughter, an acidulated disappointed maiden of uncertain age, a veritable Tabitha Bramble in disposition,

> "Whose homely face and bad complexion"

had long since

> "Caused all hopes to disappear
> Of ever winning man's affection."

She had, however, one attractive recommendation in the possession of a considerable fortune in her own right, which, in Captain Hardtack's eyes, made ample amends for her numerous personal deficiencies, and he had almost made up his mind to declare his intentions, confident in the assurance of a ready acceptance (for Miss Colchicum, like Barkis, was "willin'," and had been for years), when an event occurred which caused a complete alteration in his matrimonial plans. This event was the arrival at the post of Miss Quilkey, the daughter of Captain Quilkey, the regimental quartermaster, a bright vivacious girl of nineteen summers, who had just returned to the post from a lengthy sojourn in the East, whither she had been to com-

plete her education. Miss Quilkey was a magnificent type of budding American womanhood. She was a brunette, tall, lithe, and graceful, and her lustrous dark eyes, full of fire and life, took by storm the heart of every unmarried officer in the post. Among others who succumbed to her fascinations were Captain Hardtack and his junior subaltern, Lieutenant Symper, who both became aspirants for her hand. Now, Captain Hardtack in his inmost heart had always envied and hated Lieutenant Symper because the latter had plenty of money, and Lieutenant Symper experienced a profound contempt for his superior officer because that gentleman had none. Outwardly, however, they made a great show of cordiality until they became rivals in love, when a spirit of such deadly enmity arose between them that they disdained all intercourse save "in line of duty." Lieutenant Symper was the son of a defunct post-trader, who had amassed a competency by the sale of vitriolic whiskey and watery beer to the soldiers of some Western post. The old trader, shrewdly perceiving that his son's services in civil life would never command a remuneration equal to the pay and emoluments this liberal government bestows upon its gallant defenders, had decided to place him in the army, and after a great deal of wire-pulling and the exercise of a vast amount of adroit political *finesse*, a judicious employment of which will accomplish wonders in this free and enlightened republic, he succeeded in getting his son appointed to West Point, where that obtuse youth, to every one's intense surprise, eventually graduated. Shortly after this event the old man considerately died, leaving behind him the snug sum of one hundred thousand dollars, of which the *ci-devant* cadet, now Lieutenant Symper, forthwith took possession, and at once assumed airs of commensurate importance. Lieutenant Symper was a tall, slim young man with an incipient moustache, a vacuous smile, one idea, and an eyeglass. He seemed to be continually absorbed in the contemplation of his own personal attractions. As the soldiers less euphemistically expressed themselves, he was "stuck on himself." He had a fixed idea that he was created solely for the purpose of posing for the admiration of the feminine portion of humanity, and evidently considered himself a

lady-killer, *par excellence*, and a beau of the first water. He became deeply smitten with the charms of the beautiful Miss Quilkey, and that he had only to declare his passion to find it fully reciprocated he had not the slightest shadow of a doubt.

Captain Quilkey, the quartermaster, was an elderly man with a partiality for whiskey and whist, expensive tastes both, for he drank a great deal of the former and played most atrociously at the latter. As he had no means outside of his pay, and as Mrs. Quilkey was addicted to a gorgeous extravagance in matters relating to her personal adornment, he often experienced considerable difficulty in making "both ends meet." He therefore viewed the attentions of Lieutenant Symper to his daughter with an approving eye, though he had a very depreciative opinion of that gentleman's mental capacity. But one cannot afford to be hypercritical with a prospective son-in-law who has one hundred thousand dollars. On the other hand, Mrs. Quilkey was inclined to favor the suit of Captain Hardtack, who was the senior captain in the service, while Lieutenant Symper was only an additional second lieutenant. If her daughter married the captain she might live to see her a colonel's wife, which in the other case, at the present slow rate of promotion, she could not hope to do. And this social advantage on the one side more than outweighed, in her mind, the monetary consideration on the other. But Miss Quilkey, although she listened dutifully to her father when he enlarged upon the worldly benefits to be gained by a marriage with Lieutenant Symper, and to her mother as to the social advantages of a union with Captain Hardtack, had certain romantic notions of her own in regard to matrimony. She was, moreover, a very self-willed young lady, and certainly had no intention of being either coerced by her father or cajoled by her mother into a *mariage de convenance* with a man she did not love. She therefore rejoiced in secret at the divided counsels in the domestic camp, and hoped by a little judicious manœuvring to prevent a union of the parental forces in favor of either the captain or the lieutenant. In her ability to do this she felt that the continuation of her single blessedness lay. She certainly gave neither of her admirers the slightest

encouragement. She trembled at the thought of marriage with Captain Hardtack, whose

> "Narrow, foxy face,
> Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye"

inspired her with a feeling of deep distrust, and when in his company she made no attempt to conceal her sentiments of aversion. But this only inflamed the captain's passion and made him more determined to win her. If she hated Captain Hardtack she simply despised Lieutenant Symper, and returned his vapid compliments with such merciless and scathing sarcasm as would have convinced him of the hopelessness of his suit had he not been blinded by overweening self-conceit. Matters went on in this way for some time; the captain hesitating to make his proposal until he felt more sure of his ground. In the mean time he assumed an air of mournful resignation as best befitting the condition of a love-lorn swain, and improved "the shining hour" by assiduously cultivating the good graces of Mrs. Quilkey, upon whose co-operation in his matrimonial aspirations he plainly perceived he could count. Lieutenant Symper, however, had no such misgivings as to the success of *his* suit, and several times when alone with the fair object of his regard had been on the point of launching into an ardent declaration of his passion. But that unimpressionable young lady, whenever the conversation took a tender turn, changed it at the supreme moment into channels so severely commonplace, and with an air of such provoking nonchalance, that the lady-killing lieutenant, in spite of his assurance, was fain to defer his amorous avowal to some future occasion.

IV.

COLONEL COLCHICUM, the commanding officer of Fort Buell, was a thorough soldier, with a high sense of the honorable character of the military calling, not only from his stand-point as an officer, but as affecting the humblest

private in the regiment. He was fully convinced of the pernicious influence of the general fatigue system upon the service, and maintained that, beyond the necessary police of quarters, nothing should be required of a soldier but duties of an essentially military character. But a strict performance of these he exacted to the uttermost, aiming to make his command a model of perfection to the minutest detail, not only in the school of the soldier, but also in the general bearing and appearance of the men. To be seen about the garrison in uncleanly or slovenly attire, or to be lacking in the slightest degree in military carriage or bearing, was in his eye the gravest offence of which a soldier could be guilty. The colonel was wont to argue that the system of general fatigue was accountable for a large percentage of desertions. "Hang it, sir," he would say, in his blunt way, to the lieutenant-colonel, who entertained diametrically opposite views, "I do not want visitors to this post to go away with the idea that the uniform of the United States soldier is made of brown canvas, and that the weapon with which he is most familiar is a long-handled shovel. This is an artillery regiment, not a corps of sappers and miners, hence my men have no use for the pick." The men were thoroughly in accord with the colonel's ideas, and severe as was his *régime*, they infinitely preferred it to a life of ditch-digging and road-making, which they thought, and not without reason, was the work of a pioneer corps and not of regiments of the line. As a result of this wholesome discipline each company in the post in its desire to attain the colonel's standard of military perfection became filled with a spirit of generous emulation, and the regiment earned the enviable reputation of being the smartest in the service. The military routine at Fort Buell began at réveille. At eight o'clock the regiment turned out for dress parade, and immediately after this ceremony the adjutant mounted the guard. Then, after a short interval, came drill for an hour in the school of the battalion, or in mechanical manœuvres with the heavy guns in the casemates, and this in the winter months concluded the military duties of the day.

It thus happened that Private Jones had ample leisure at his disposal, and he was in the habit after morning drill of

taking long walks in the fine country in the neighborhood, and when the weather grew cold enough he spent a good deal of time skating on a small lake a mile or so from the post. In the clear winter afternoons parties of officers, with their wives and daughters, and scores of soldiers might be seen hurrying through the keen crisp air to this lake to indulge in the same invigorating recreation. On a certain afternoon several ladies of the post (among whom was Miss Quilkey), accompanied by Captain Hardtack, Lieutenant Symper, and other officers of the garrison, went down to the lake for a spin upon the ice. As a matter of fact, both the captain and the lieutenant regarded this excursion with considerable misgiving, for neither could skate; but both made a point of going, as each was afraid the other might steal a march on him on the way down if he remained away. Miss Quilkey was a superb performer on the ice, and as soon as her skates had been adjusted she glided swiftly out on to the glassy surface in a succession of intricate and graceful curves, disdaining many a willing proffer of escort. Shortly afterwards the rivals, with gloomy forebodings of disaster, timidly ventured on to the icy expanse to encounter all the hideous experiences of a first time on skates. The lake was soon covered with a host of flying skaters, whose enjoyment of the sport was so keen that the initial struggles of Captain Hardtack and his subaltern were almost unnoticed.

The afternoon wore on apace, and the officers and their ladies were preparing to leave the pond, when the attention of every one was attracted by screams mingled with the cracking of ice, and not far away in the gathering gloom a lady was seen struggling in the water. It seems that Miss Quilkey, in skating back to join her friends from a distant portion of the lake, unwisely tried to make a short-cut across a treacherous-looking piece of ice beneath an overhanging clump of trees. Lieutenant Symper was nearest to the scene of the accident, and for some time past had been in that vicinity making strenuous but unsuccessful attempts to maintain his equilibrium with the aid of a chair. Captain Hardtack's efforts at locomotion were as yet confined to an occasional series of spasmodic scuffles, which invariably terminated in his taking a seat upon the ice with

unexpected suddenness. Assistance, therefore, from either of these gentlemen was out of the question, and it might have fared ill with Miss Quilkey had her cries not reached the ears of Private Jones, who was skating at no great distance away. He hurried to the spot, skating boldly to within a few feet of the hole. He then lay down in order to distribute his weight over the greatest possible area, and crawled cautiously towards the broken edge until he grasped Miss Quilkey's hand. He had almost succeeded in pulling her out of the water when their united weight proved too great a strain; the ice broke again and precipitated both into the water.

But by this time assistance was rapidly converging from all sides, and Private Jones knew that if he could hold out for a few minutes longer and support Miss Quilkey, who was now insensible, their safety was assured. Fortunately, a rope had been brought to the lake by a prudent member of the party in view of possible emergencies, and a noose having been made in this, the bight was flung to Private Jones, who had just sufficient strength left to pass it round Miss Quilkey and over his own shoulders before the numbing sensation of cold robbed him of consciousness. When he regained his senses it was to find himself in the post hospital and the hero of the garrison. After she recovered from the shock of her immersion, Miss Quilkey sent for Private Jones to personally express her gratitude for his timely aid.

"I am so deeply indebted to you, Jones; I feel I owe my life to you," she said, with evident feeling, grasping his hand warmly.

"Do not mention it, Miss Quilkey," said Private Jones, bowing. "I did nothing but my duty. I am only too happy to have been of service."

If Miss Quilkey was surprised at the courteous tone of the speaker, a tone that indicated a degree of culture and breeding far above his station, she was still more surprised to find that her rescuer was a remarkably good-looking young fellow with the unmistakable air of a gentleman, and that night in the solitude of her chamber, as she sat by the fire before retiring to rest, in a dainty lace-edged *robe de chambre*, she caught herself more than once think-

ing of the handsome private who had saved her life at the risk of his own. "Pshaw!" said she, as she crept into her cozy bed; "how absurd of me to be thinking of a soldier in this way!" But despite the absurdity he remained in her thoughts until she fell asleep.

The next day at guard-mount Private Jones was detailed as orderly to the commanding officer. She passed him several times during the day as he followed the portly figure of the colonel in the daily round of garrison inspection, and she could not help remarking to her friend, Miss Probang, the doctor's daughter, who accompanied her, how handsome and soldierly the orderly looked in his trim and well-fitting uniform. The days went by, and Private Jones, instead of lingering in her recollection merely as one who had done her a service, grew to be the central figure in her thoughts. She began to take an unusual interest in the morning parades, and her eyes brightened as they dwelt upon a stalwart figure on the extreme right of the leading battery, as the regiment in column of companies swept past in review. This growing regard for one beyond the pale of social cognizance began to frighten her, and when she asked herself what this new emotion was that stirred her pulses and thrilled her with a vague delight, she dared not supply the answer. An officer's daughter to be captivated by the personal beauty of a private soldier,—it was ridiculous! Consideration for her friends and respect for the honor of her family demanded that she should stifle this rising regard, and she strove with all her strength to subdue it. But her efforts were in vain, for this vulgar passion daily gathering strength gradually overwhelmed her remaining scruples of shame, pride, and self-respect, and she finally awoke to the humiliating yet pleasing consciousness that she loved the handsome Private Jones with all the strength of her impetuous nature.

In the performance of his duties in various parts of the garrison Private Jones frequently passed Miss Quilkey, and he had long formed a mental opinion that she was the loveliest girl he had ever seen. At first his thoughts were simply the outcome of that respectful admiration with which any honest man may regard a beautiful woman, however wide

the social gulf between them. During the weeks following the accident on the lake he also frequently met her in his solitary walks in the adjacent country, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by her lady friends of the garrison, and on every occasion she gave him a little inclination of her dainty head by way of recognition, from which he knew that the remembrance of his service still lived gratefully in her recollection. Her exquisite beauty daily grew upon him, and he began to look forward to his afternoon walks with unwonted interest. Ere long he felt that his nascent admiration was growing into a warmer and deeper emotion, and at last he stood face to face with the fact that he was hopelessly, desperately in love. Had he not been so deeply in earnest he would have laughed at the very idea of such preposterous presumption. As it was, he felt that the only thing he could do was to stamp out this absurd passion at any cost to himself, and, lover-like, proceeded very illogically to continue his walks, arguing that whatever his ultimate course might be, he need not at present deny himself the happiness of seeing her. Had he only known the state of her mind his own might have been less gloomy. Sometimes when he passed her he fancied that he noticed a rising flush suffusing the lovely face, and he wondered whether she could have any suspicion of his secret. Private Jones, though a common soldier, was a man of honor and a man of sense. He determined that by no act of his should she ever learn that secret, and made up his mind to apply for a transfer to the Seventh Cavalry, at that time stationed near a hostile Indian encampment, in the hope that in the hardship and excitement of campaign life he might find a nepenthe. The next day he made out his application and handed the same to the first sergeant until the return of Captain Hardtack, who had left the post on a three days' leave of absence. Now, in Battery "A" there was a certain Private Robinson who had won the virgin affections of a buxom female domestic of Milesian extraction who presided over the culinary department in the quarters of Captain Quilkey. As enlisted men were not allowed in the vicinity of the officers' quarters, save in line of duty, the gallant Private Robinson was reduced to the necessity of holding stolen meetings in the unromantic seclusion of

the scullery, where about three nights a week he discussed his future matrimonial plans, and simultaneously disposed of surreptitious snacks of cold comestibles which the buxom cook, devoutly believing in the old adage, "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach," abstracted from the larder for his refection. Among other garrison gossip which he retailed one night for the delectation of his lady-love was the fact that Private Jones had applied for a transfer to the front. There was really nothing in this particular fact to interest the fair Milesian, but the war with the Sioux was at that time the principal topic of discussion throughout the garrison, and Private Robinson incidentally mentioned Private Jones's transfer in the course of a lengthy dissertation on the campaign, wherein he proved to the entire satisfaction of himself and the buxom cook that had the war been conducted on the principles he laid down the whole affair would have been amicably settled long ago. As there appeared to be no prospect of any immediate refreshment, he concluded by expressing a desire to be summarily scalped if he didn't apply for a transfer himself before guard-mount next morning. This contingency so alarmed the buxom cook that she forthwith went to an adjoining cupboard, and produced therefrom a bottle and the remains of a beefsteak pie, a proceeding which previous experience had taught her was usually followed by unusual good spirits on the part of her admirer.

Private Robinson winked at his reflection in a small mirror on the opposite wall as a tribute to the success of his diplomacy, and after several draughts from the bottle to the health of the buxom cook, he proceeded to demolish the pie, afterwards allaying her fears with the assurance that "she needn't feel no alarm, he wasn't going to no front nohow."

The day after this *tête-à-tête*, Mrs. Quilkey descended to the subterranean depths of the kitchen to superintend the manufacture of an enormous cake and the composition of various other delicacies, in preparation for an approaching party to be given in celebration of her daughter's twentieth birthday. In these domestic duties she was assisted by that accomplished young lady and the buxom cook, whose mind

was much exercised in fabricating a diatribe upon the thievish propensities of a very placid-looking cat purring contentedly by the stove, from which she hoped her mistress would account inferentially for the disappearance of the pie, the absence of which that careful housewife had already noticed. "Would you belave, mum, not alone the pie, but last Monday night that thafe of a cat stole the lavings of the fish, which they are that partial to as you may 'ave 'eard, to say nothin' of nigh a pound of steak," said the buxom cook, with an assumption of virtuous indignation, not, however, without a twinge of conscience at the maze of mendacity into which Private Robinson's extraordinary appetite bade fair to lead her. At any other time Mrs. Quilkey might have expressed her scepticism as to the cat's ability to purloin a beefsteak pie from the upper shelf of a closed cupboard, but this morning her mind was greatly perturbed by a growing rumor, which had some official weight, to the effect that, in view of the grave state of affairs at the front, there was a probability of the Eighth Artillery being ordered into the field to serve as infantry. She therefore contented herself with merely desiring the cook to be more careful in future, and then began to discuss the topic of the hour with her daughter, expressing the fear that the troops might be ordered to take the field at any moment. "Indade, mum, I 'ope not," said the buxom cook, with a sympathetic air. "Them Indians is such murtherin' wretches, more betoken I'm after 'earin' last night as Private Jones, the young man what saved your life, miss, as is in the same battery along with Private Robinson, which is my 'usban' that is to be, is that anxious to go he's gone and transferred there." This statement caused Miss Quilkey the greatest agitation, and as soon as her mother left the kitchen she took advantage of the opportunity to question the buxom cook further on the matter. And the buxom cook, little suspecting the interest her words excited, repeated that all she had been told was that Private Jones had obtained a transfer to the Seventh Cavalry. It was only when she heard this that Miss Quilkey realized the depth and strength of her affection. The last few days when alone in her own room she had asked herself what would be the outcome of her degrading love for Private Jones, and had half tortured

herself into a determination to adopt heroic measures ; in other words, to go on a lengthy visit to some relatives of her mother's, in the hope of living it down. But now that he was going from her she felt that this love had grown to be part of her very life ; she could not, nay, would not give it up, come what might. But what could she do? Her first action was peculiarly feminine. She went to her room, and in its friendly solitude indulged in that soothing resource which is known among the fair sex as a "good cry." Her presence was required that day to assist in the decoration of the hop room for a *bal masque* which the post Committee of Arrangements had decreed should come off that evening. But her interest in this work was gone, and not a few of the young ladies present noticed her air of listlessness and *distraite.* During the afternoon she slipped away on the plea of headache—she should have said heartache—and hurried to take her usual walk, in the hope that she might meet him once more before he left. She took the oft-frequented road outside the reservation fence, and as she turned aside from the main road into a narrow pathway that lead to the lake, she saw the well-known stalwart figure striding towards her. "I must speak to him," she said to herself. She strove to still the rebellious beating of her heart : she must be calm, or he would detect her secret ; she would merely thank him again for the service he had done her and bid him a formal good-by, and then—but she could not bear to think of the dreariness beyond. As he approached she noticed that his face wore a saddened and gloomy expression. He was about to pass with the usual formal recognition, when he saw that she wished to speak to him and stopped.

"Private Jones," said she, striving to conceal her agitation, "I am told you are going away. I am so sorry that —in other words, I mean to say—that is, I thought I should like to thank—to—to—bid you good-by."

At the word "good-by" her voice broke down in a pathetic little quaver, and Private Jones, taking the slender gloved hand extended to him, saw that the girl's tender lips were quivering, and that a tear trembled on the long lashes that fringed the soft, dark eyes. His heart throbbed with a wild, tumultuous joy as the truth dawned upon him.

He forgot that he was a private soldier; he forgot that she was an officer's daughter; he forgot everything save the fact that he loved this beautiful girl, and that his affection was returned. He drew her to him and, bending down, kissed her on the lips, whispering, "Dearest, this is too great happiness; may I—dare I hope?" And Edith Quilkey, placing both her hands in his, bowed her head and simply said, "I love you."

Then they wandered off together into the unfrequented solitude of the wood for a few delicious moments of sweet communings, wherein Edith discovered to her delight that her soldier lover was a man of undoubted breeding and refinement.

Now, Lieutenant Symper looking out of the window of his quarters happened to see Miss Quilkey passing out of the garrison gate, and he inferred that she was going for her usual walk, but she was too far ahead for him to overtake her. The road to the lake made a wide semicircular sweep round the garrison, and if he made a bee-line across the reservation, he might be able to intercept her, and at any rate have the pleasure of her company for a portion of the way. For some time past the lieutenant had been elaborating a very poetic effusion in which he intended to make the offer of his hand and heart as soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself, and it occurred to him that the road to the lake was perhaps as romantic and secluded a spot as could be found for the purpose. "Now or never," said he, as he stepped out in quick time for the reservation fence. Between the fence and the side-path to the lake was a thicket of considerable width through which he had to make his way. As he was about to step from this thicket into the roadway his eyes encountered a sight which transfixed him with astonishment. Could he believe the evidence of his senses? There, not a hundred paces away from him, was the woman to whom he was about to make an offer of marriage, submitting, and not unwillingly, to the osculatory caress of a private soldier! As he stood there spellbound, they linked arm in arm and vanished into the opposite thicket, and he remained for ten minutes or more staring vacantly at the forsaken road, absolutely incapable of thought or motion.

"Damn that fellow's infernal impudence!" he said to himself, finally turning to retrace his steps to the garrison. As he passed the guard-house he espied the spare form of Captain Hardtack crossing the parade-ground, and forgetting all his personal enmity in the discovery which meant discomfiture to both of them, and thus extinguished their rivalry, he determined to tell the captain what he had seen in the wood. Captain Hardtack appeared to be totally unconscious of the approach of his subaltern, and affected to take an absorbing interest in the frantic efforts of a teamster of the quartermaster's department to induce a refractory mule to proceed in a straight line, that obstinate animal having an insane predilection for travelling sideways like a crab. "Captain Hardtack, I have something I wish to say to you if you can spare the time," said the lieutenant, with intense solemnity.

Captain Hardtack feigned a start of surprise, as though Lieutenant Symper was the very last person he expected to see, and then said, in a very frigid tone, "I am at the orderly-room every morning at half-past seven, Mr. Symper, when I shall be pleased to listen to anything you may have to say to me ah—er—in the line of duty."

"But this has nothing to do with the line of duty," said the lieutenant, with some agitation. "It is a matter which nearly concerns us both."

"I was not aware, Mr. Symper," said the captain, with an abortive effort to assume an expression of hauteur,—"I was not aware, Mr. Symper, that anything in which you are concerned could by any possible chance ah—er—have the slightest interest for me."

"But it has," continued the lieutenant, ignoring in his persistence the captain's studied insolence, "and so you will admit if you will grant me a few moments for explanation." And the captain, seeing that the lieutenant had evidently something out of the ordinary to communicate, led the way to his quarters.

Captain Hardtack was at first inclined to think that Lieutenant Symper must be suffering from some species of hallucination, and on second thoughts that this extraordinary story was some overreaching subtlety on the part of his subaltern that he could not at present fathom. He,

however, felt that it must be the truth when the lieutenant continued :

"Captain Hardtack, our relations have been somewhat strained of late owing to our rivalry over this—over Miss Quilkey. As I do not care to number among my acquaintances, much less to regard as my future wife, a woman who could so far forget herself as to engage in a low amour with a private soldier, I no longer consider myself a suitor for her hand, and I trust that from this moment our estrangement may cease."

Now, Captain Hardtack, whatever his other faults, certainly loved Miss Quilkey with all the intensity of his nature, and he determined not to give her up under any circumstances. He felt that her affection for Private Jones could be nothing more than a foolish fancy which would die out when the object of it was removed. He congratulated himself that Jones's application for transfer was still in his hands; he could easily revoke the indorsement of disapproval he had put on that morning and forward the application "approved and recommended." The transfer would undoubtedly "go through," as men were badly needed on the frontier. Lieutenant Symper's rivalry was no longer to be dreaded, and the captain really believed that his prospects, which latterly he had begun to regard as somewhat gloomy, looked brighter than ever before.

"I think," he said to Lieutenant Symper, after having maturely considered the case,—"I think you had better mention this painful matter to Captain Quilkey in a quiet moment. He is in the city on business just now, I believe, but he will be back on Saturday. He will probably send his daughter away for a month or so, and amid new faces and surroundings she will speedily forget this foolish fancy. This scoundrel Jones has undoubtedly presumed upon the service he once did her, and I do not think that her regard for him can amount to anything more than an exaggerated sense of gratitude. We are, of course, in honor bound to keep this matter secret; to do otherwise would only involve Miss Quilkey in humiliation and disgrace. As for this villain Jones, I will forward his application with a strong recommendation that it be granted, and when once he is out of the way, depend upon it, she will forget him. In

the mean time, it is my opinion that the best thing we can do is to preserve the strictest secrecy, taking care not to betray by any word or action that we have the slightest inkling of the affair."

"But I am under an engagement to dine there this evening, and afterwards to take her to the masquerade," said Lieutenant Symper. "How can I do this in the face of what I know?"

"It is unpleasant, certainly," admitted the captain, "but it will be policy on your part to go; indeed, I do not see that you, in view of your previous intimacy, can well make an excuse without exciting suspicion."

"That is so," said the lieutenant, gloomily. "Go I must, I suppose."

Edith Quilkey had never appeared to greater advantage than she did that evening. How could this brilliant, vivacious, and accomplished girl condescend to receive the vulgar caresses of a private soldier? thought the unhappy lieutenant, as he listened to her bright sallies.

"You seem very dull this evening, Mr. Symper," she said, in surprise at the lieutenant's monosyllabic replies, for he was usually so talkative. "And the night of the masquerade, too; you ought to be in your gayest mood."

"I took a long walk this afternoon, and I don't think it agreed with me," replied the lieutenant, with frank veracity.

"Why, I enjoyed my walk immensely, it was such a glorious afternoon," said Edith, with an air of ingenuous innocence. "I walked half round the reservation fence and home by the lake."

"Quite a long walk to take—alone," remarked the lieutenant, curtly.

There was something in the way he said this so different from his ordinary tone—just the faintest *soupçon* of sarcasm, the merest stress of emphasis on the word "alone"—that her suspicions were aroused. She looked at him; their eyes met steadily, and hers fell,—for she knew intuitively that her secret was known.

V.

IT was the custom of the officers and ladies of the garrison at Fort Buell to meet together every Wednesday evening in the post library for the weekly "hop." One day it occurred to Lieutenant Symper to suggest a *bal masque* as variation from the unchanging monotony. This brilliant inspiration was welcomed with enthusiasm by the committee of arrangements, who were always on the lookout for novelties. There were plenty of visitors of both sexes in the post at the time, and the officers had hosts of friends and acquaintances in the city who would be only too glad to attend, so that everything augured well for the success of the affair. So many invitations were issued that the accommodations of the post library were deemed quite inadequate, and recourse was had to the great hall of the gymnasium, the floor of which was carefully waxed and prepared for the occasion. The decoration of this room had been intrusted to the superintendence of Miss Penwiper, the adjutant's daughter, Miss Probang, the doctor's daughter, Miss Quilkey, and other young ladies of the garrison, and right well they acquitted themselves of their task, only concluding their arduous labors on the very day of the dance. Shortly after retreat the carriages of the city people began to arrive, and before tattoo had sounded the hall was full. The ballroom was a scene of brilliant light and color. At the end of the great hall, which was decorated with tastefully-draped flags, the national and regimental colors hung in drooping folds, surrounded by glittering stacks of arms, the bright sheen of the bayonets and the crossed swords upon the walls glinting with a thousand flashing rays in the light of a multitude of delicately-shaded lamps, while the many-hued, quaint, and varied costumes of the masqueraders imparted a kaleidoscopic diversity to the scene.

Here might be seen a turbaned Turk engaged in conversation with a masked maiden in the picturesque attire of a Tyrolean peasant-girl, and there a tall figure in the gaudy uniform of a Spahi officer bending gracefully over a settee to interchange a running fire of badinage with some lovely unknown in the coquettish dress of a Mexican poblana. The fact that the masks and strange costumes effect-

ually concealed the identity of every one present infused an unwonted spirit of interest into the revel, and as midnight, the hour of unmasking, approached, a general feeling of curiosity as to identities arose, which, in those who had made use of so favorable an opportunity to prosecute a series of somewhat vigorous flirtations was not, perhaps, untinged with misgiving. In spite of the confusion of identities a mutual understanding evidently existed between a tall gentleman clad in conventional evening attire and wearing a gray silk mask and a young lady in a blue domino and the dress of a Spanish dancer, a costume that revealed all the supple curves of the wearer's graceful and exquisitely-moulded form. In the early part of the evening the gentleman in the gray silk mask singled out the lady in the blue domino, and instead of indulging in the stereotyped request for the pleasure of the next waltz, said, in low voice, "Can you recognize me, Edith?"

"You here!" said the lady in the blue domino, with a start of unfeigned terror. "Oh, pray be careful, it is so very dangerous, and I cannot bear to think what would happen if you were discovered."

"Do not be in the least alarmed," said Private Jones, for he it was in the gray mask. "In the very audacity of the idea lies my safety. No one would ever suspect a private soldier of daring to mix with this gay throng."

"But how did you get here? Admission is by ticket, and the sentry at the door has positive orders to admit no one without a card of invitation," said Edith, adjusting the blue domino more securely.

"I found a blank card some days ago," said Private Jones, "in the library. I also discovered this afternoon that Private MacTurk, on account of his imposing aspect, would be detailed for this particular 'sentry go,' and knowing that his education had been shamefully neglected, I took advantage of that fact and handed him the blank card, which he accepted with as much reverence as though it had been duly signed by the committee. My greatest difficulty was to obtain a costume, for my choice was somewhat restricted. I, however, recollected that this old London-made suit of evening dress still lay at the bottom of my trunk, so the chances are I shall either be taken for

an Anglomaniac or some visiting Englishman from the city. But you must reserve as many of the waltzes as possible for me before twelve o'clock, as by that time I must contrive to mysteriously disappear."

"But I am so terrified!" whispered Edith. "What would happen if you were discovered? Still, I am glad you are here," she added, softly. "I have something important to tell you, so let us sit out our next dance."

"No, not the next; it is 'My Sweetheart;' we must dance that, you know. Let us sit out the following lancers," said Private Jones.

Edith Quilkey was undoubtedly very frightened at her lover's extraordinary audacity, but as she whirled around on his vigorous arm to the rhythmical measures of the dance she became conscious only of a languorous sense of happiness, and with his eyes gazing down into hers she forgot all her fears and abandoned herself to a voluptuous glow of enjoyment. They sat out the next dance in a quiet nook at the far corner of the hall, and in this *tête-à-tête* she told her lover her reasons for believing that their secret was known. "If Lieutenant Symper knows it, and I feel sure he does, he will tell papa, and I shall be sent away," she said, fearfully.

"Will you trust me implicitly, Edith?" asked Private Jones, who saw in her fears an opportunity to test the depth of her affection.

"Have I not told you, dear, that I would give up everything for your sake," she said, somewhat reproachfully.

Private Jones bent his head down to hers and whispered something. She did not reply for some minutes, but the warm blood crimsoning out from under the blue domino spread over the fair white neck and bosom, and bore evidence to the struggle going on within her. Finally she laid her hand in his and said, "I will," which, being interpreted, meant that they were to go to the city on the morrow and be privately married, for in this course it seemed their only guard against ultimate separation lay. They danced nearly every waltz together, and Private Jones so far forgot himself in his sense of delirious enjoyment as to take no note of time, and it was not until Edith said, "Oh, do go now; it is a quarter to twelve," that he realized his

position, and with a fondly whispered "Till to-morrow," he disappeared from the room.

When the hour of unmasking arrived many and great were the surprises. Colonel Colchicum was attired in the robes of a monk of La Trappe, though his portly form and rubicund visage implied a decided disbelief in the tenets of that ascetic order. Lieutenant Symper, who was of a Shakespearian turn of mind, appeared as Bottom, a character which Miss Quilkey wickedly said to her friend Miss Probang had one great advantage, had he only known it, in that he might have saved himself the trouble of purchasing a mask. Captain Hardtack looked supremely uncomfortable in a coat of chain mail of the twelfth century period, several sizes too large for him. There was a vague impression prevailing that he intended to represent Richard Cœur de Lion, though his slight, spare form certainly was not suggestive of the herculean proportions of the kingly Crusader. Opinions seemed to be about equally divided as to the costume of Mrs. Colchicum, a wonderful, bag-like, waistless creation covered all over with variegated furbelows and exaggerated flounces, the whole surmounted by a stupendous turban of gorgeous hue and complicated structure, some inclining to the belief that she represented a lady of the Georgian era, others that she intended to impersonate the Great Mogul.

"Who was that tall gentleman who danced with you so frequently, Edith?" said Mrs. Quilkey next morning.

"Really, ma, I could not see through that thick silk mask, and he left the hall before twelve o'clock," returned Edith, with ready equivocation. "But did he not waltz divinely?"

Two days after the ball Private Jones was detailed as orderly, and in the forenoon of the same day Captain Quilkey came back to the post. Lieutenant Symper, who was on the watch for him, went over to the captain's quarters to unburden himself of his unpleasant news. The stern old quartermaster heard him out in silence, and then said, his face flushing deeply,—

"By G——, sir, if this preposterous story is not true, I——"

"The word 'if,' Captain Quilkey, insinuates a doubt of

my veracity. Ask your daughter before you condemn my statement; she shall be my witness," said the lieutenant, hotly.

"I intend to ask her, sir."

"In that event, sir, you will permit me to withdraw. You will admit that it is scarcely fitting a third party should be present."

"I will admit nothing of the sort, sir," retorted the captain, ringing the bell furiously.

"Send Miss Quilkey here!" he shouted to the buxom cook, who answered his terrific peal with an expression on her features as though she were apprehensive that the house was on fire.

Edith came down looking very lovely in her light morning gown, but at the sight of Lieutenant Symper and her father's angry face she turned visibly pale.

"Edith, I have just heard a most extraordinary story," said the captain, and he repeated the sum and substance of Lieutenant Symper's statement. "Tell me it is not true," he added, pathetically.

"It is true, papa," said Edith, growing pale as death. "But I love him very dearly."

"Love be ——!" roared the furious old man, concluding his sentence with a word that rhymes with "jammed."

"And oh, papa, I *must* tell you, I—I—he is—I am his wife," said Edith, tremblingly.

"What!" shouted the captain and the lieutenant, in a simultaneous burst of incredulous astonishment.

Just at this moment a knock came to the outer door, and immediately afterwards the colonel entered, while his orderly, Private Jones, could be seen pacing up and down the front of the quarters outside. The colonel saw at a glance that the relations were somewhat strained, and having a wholesome horror of domestic scenes, he would have beaten a hasty retreat had not Captain Quilkey closed the door.

"No, no, colonel!" he said, almost sobbing. "Advise me, my friend, in this disgrace that has fallen upon me." And in a few broken sentences he explained the situation to the astonished colonel.

"God bless my soul!" said that bewildered warrior when he heard the story. "Call the orderly in, Mr. Symper."

"You scoundrel! You infernal villain!" shouted Captain Quilkey, his face purple with fury, as Private Jones entered the room. "Out of my sight, or——" Here his comminatory language came to a dead stop from absolute want of breath, and the threat remained unuttered.

Private Jones took in the situation at a glance, saluted the colonel with military precision, and stood to attention at the door, looking as little like a scoundrel as it is possible to conceive.

As he stood there, Edith, still very pale, but quite calm and collected, crossed the room, linked her arm with his, and clung by his side.

"Sir," said Private Jones, addressing the colonel, "I had intended to see Captain Quilkey when relieved from guard for the purpose of making an explanation in regard to this matter, but this unexpected *contretemps* has rendered it necessary that I should make that explanation now. My present name I may say is a pseudonyme: I am the son of the late Gilbert Longhurst, the millionaire of New York City, of whom you may possibly have heard. I quarrelled with my father some years ago, and with the perversity and obstinacy of youth declined to make any overtures of reconciliation. I left home to make my way in the world unaided. I was possessed of a small annuity from my mother's estate, which was sufficient to provide me with the necessaries of life, but having no wish to lead an utterly purposeless existence, and being totally unacquainted with any method of earning a livelihood, I enlisted in the United States service with the ultimate intention of trying for a commission. For reasons in no wise connected with the subject at issue I abandoned this idea. You know how I had the good fortune to be instrumental in saving the life of Miss—of my wife; a circumstance which was the means of bringing us together, and which resulted in a mutual affection. I received a letter some days ago informing me of the death of my father, an event which has materially altered my social status. I said nothing of this to my wife, as I wished to see whether she would abandon all that she held dear for one she believed to be nothing more than a private soldier. The fact that she did so unreservedly is to me the sweetest evidence of the depth and

unselfishness of her affection. It may perhaps induce Captain Quilkey to modify his harsh opinion of me, and may likewise tend to remove that opprobrium which will naturally be visited upon my wife for having contracted what is doubtless considered an ignominious mésalliance, when I say that by the death of my father I have inherited an estate valued at something like two million dollars. In proof of this statement I am prepared to hand you letters from a well-known legal firm in New York City. I have now, sir, only to respectfully request your approval to an application for the purchase of my discharge, which will be laid before you in the morning."

To say that this announcement produced a sensation expresses the situation very inadequately. Every one was in a state of stupefaction. The colonel was the first to recover from the astonishment this extraordinary turn of affairs had caused, and at once recognized the altered status of his orderly.

"Jones," said he, "I shall be pleased to approve your application for discharge. In the mean time it will be as well for you to take a leave of absence. Tell the sergeant of the guard to send the supernumerary over as orderly in your place: you are relieved from duty this moment."

Private Jones saluted and turned to leave the room. His lovely wife, her face crimsoned now with a glow of mingled pride and love, crossed over to her astounded father, and, putting her arms round his neck, whispered, coaxingly, "Papa dear, forgive us."

That night the stern old man shook hands with his soldier son-in-law, immeasurably happy to find that his beautiful daughter had not made a mésalliance after all.

When the news became the property of the garrison it created a tremendous sensation. Dozens of soldiers suddenly discovered that they had always anticipated something of the sort, and the buxom cook remarked to Private Robinson, as he disposed of a liberal allowance of ham and eggs,—

"Sure an' it's himself was always a gintleman, with his illegant ways."

As for Captain Hardtack, he did not appear in the bachelor's mess for some days, and it was currently re-

ported at that festive board that the gallant captain communed with himself in closed quarters in language which is best represented on paper in a succession of blanks. Lieutenant Symper for a time forswore the society of the fickle sex altogether, and made abortive efforts to cultivate the cynical air of a confirmed misogynist; but his susceptible nature speedily recovered from the blow, and ere long he surrendered to the charms of Miss Penwiper, whom he finally married with great *éclat*.

L'ENVOI.

In a lovely home on the banks of the Hudson River, Edward Longhurst and his lovely wife still live, and their youthful son and heir is never tired of listening to tales of the time when "papa" was "Private Jones of the Eighth."

JACK HILTON'S LOVE-AFFAIR.

I.

LIEUTENANT JOHN RANDOLPH HILTON, or, more briefly, Jack Hilton, as he was familiarly known among his more intimate acquaintance, sat in the cosey and elegantly-appointed library of the paternal mansion on Madison Avenue, with the morning paper in his hands and his eyes fixed with a look of apparently profound interest upon the column devoted to sporting news. He had just completed his twenty-fourth year; was nearly six feet tall, with a form finely proportioned, clear blue eyes, light hair, and complexion to match, regular features, and of easy and engaging manners. He was an adept in all manly sports and athletic exercises; a bold and fearless rider, with an almost overweening love of horseflesh; which latter trait had, a few days before, led him, for the first time in his life, into doing a very foolish thing. He had bet—some would not hesitate to say recklessly for a person of his rather slender means—upon his favorite horse, which had been badly beaten in the late races at Jerome Park; and which fact, being duly chronicled in the morning papers, would have afforded him, it is to be supposed, food for reflection of a somewhat painful nature. But it would have been apparent to a close observer that his eyes were not following the lines; and, from his expression, that the subject-matter before him was not that which engrossed his thoughts.

This was further evinced by his suddenly tossing the paper aside, rising abruptly from his chair, and pacing up and down the room, muttering to himself, "By Jove, a capital idea! If this isn't a stroke in love's diplomacy that is sure to win, let no one hereafter say that there is the first spark of genius in Jack Hilton's noddle, that's all."

He resumed his seat a minute or two after with an air of intense self-satisfaction, and lit a cigar just as the door opened and a young man entered the room.

"Accept my sincerest condolences, old boy," were his first words, as he extended his hand to his friend. "Can't stop but a moment; but I thought you needed sympathy."

"Pshaw! I don't want your condolences or your sympathy," exclaimed Hilton. "I never felt better in my life. Congratulate me, old fellow! Congratulate me! Victory is at last in sight."

"Well, you do take it rather peculiarly, to say the least," remarked the other, laughing. "For a man who is just out of pocket a cool three hundred to ask the congratulations of—— But you know you have not won your——"

"I say I have,—just as good as won," exclaimed Hilton.

"Just as good as won? What do you mean?" cried his friend, regarding him with a perplexed look. "Are you crazy? I tell you, you have lost. Why, Excelsior came in third. Haven't you seen the morning papers?"

"Oh," said Hilton, with a laugh, "you are talking about those beastly races."

"The man actually laughs about it. Of course I am. And I must say, as the result of your first venture——"

"And I say," exclaimed Hilton, interrupting him, "confound the races! My brain was full of another matter. Sit down; I have something to tell you."

His friend, Charles Levison, drew a chair up to the opposite side of the fireplace and seated himself.

"Fire away; let fly the shafts of your eloquence, Roanoke (sometimes facetiously so called by his friends on account of his illustrious namesake), for I think I rightly surmise your theme, and I am all attention," he said, settling himself comfortably back in his chair and regarding Hilton with a somewhat amused expression.

"As my oldest and most esteemed friend, Charlie," Hilton began, handing him a cigar and relighting his own, "whom I have made my confidant all along, as you know, in this *affaire du cœur* of mine with Louise, I am now going to confide to you my next proposed step. It will bring her to my arms at once, I feel sure. I am going to write a novel. I did think at first that I would attempt a poem; something in the style of 'Childe Harold'; regular Spenserian metre, four cantos, and all that; but I'm afraid poesy wouldn't prove my winning card; my—my forte

doesn't lie exactly in that direction; No; I'll write a novel."

Levison did not look the least bit enlightened. He could not see the connection between Hilton's writing a novel and his way to the fair Louise's heart. But he smoked on in silence, and awaited further developments.

"Louise, you know," pursued his friend, "besides her other charms and accomplishments, is possessed of high literary attainments; being in that respect, indeed, especially gifted. She dotes on Byron and Moore, admires sentiments strongly and warmly expressed, and inclines almost wholly to the romantic school of poets,—as she calls it; and she has often accused me of having no poetry in my soul, because I don't go off into high-flown raptures, like herself, over her favorite authors. Imagine a veteran like me, a plain, matter-of-fact, hardy old son of Mars, paying court to the Muses, and falling into ecstasies of that kind! But I am sure she likes me; though, like all of her sex, she is, of course, more or less fickle. She sort of plays fast and loose with me. One day she warms and another fairly freezes me. I don't know how often she has said to me, 'Jack, if you were only an author.' Indeed, she has said it so often, and at times, as I have thought, with such peculiar significance, that I have been tempted to interpret her meaning into, 'Jack, if you were only an author, I'd marry you.' Now, you know, I'm not literary myself,—that is, not particularly so; and there's all the trouble. Louise is so awfully literary herself that, no doubt, she has made up her mind she won't marry a man who isn't. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* Yes, I shall write a novel."

"Why not begin in a more modest way, with a short essay!" said Levison. "But *can* you write a novel?"

"Of course I can't. When I spoke of doing so I simply meant the mechanical or manual part."

"But, my dear fellow, it requires brains—some at least—as well as hands to be an author."

"Well, not necessarily in all cases," laughed Hilton, "judging from some of the specimens of the literary art with which the market is now glutted. But in my case, others will supply the brains."

"Ah! I see. In plain English, you will bribe some

poor devil of an author to write your novel for you, which, when transcribed into your own handwriting, you will proceed to palm off upon an unsuspecting public as the offspring of your own genius."

"You haven't quite hit it," said Hilton; "but not to keep you in suspense any longer, I will now let you into my secret. But first—make me a bet; for I want to win back some of the money I lost on that confounded horse. I will wager you a hundred to fifty that I will write and have published, within one month from the present time, a good, readable novel, not of my own composition or any one else's,—better than any of Howells's, Bulwer's, or Crawford's, or any other author, and a great deal more original."

"And yet not written by any one," observed Levison, smiling at the absurdity of the idea.

"Now for my secret," continued Hilton. "I go to a circulating library and procure—say a dozen novels; or as many as I can carry away in two or three visits. From each of these I select three chapters and a half, which will give me, at the least, forty-two; enough to make a good-sized novel. The subject, of course, must turn upon love and heroism; for that is the kind Louise likes."

"But, my dear fellow," remarked Levison, amused at his friend's earnestness, "there will be no connection; no continuity of plan or plot."

"No,—but an amazing degree of variety."

"And then the names."

"Those, of course, I shall alter. There must be an English nobleman,—say the Earl of Broadlands, and his young and lovely daughter and sole heiress, the Lady Ethelinda. The rival lovers,—Sir Marmaduke Neville and the Count de Château Rouge; and a villain,—Jasper Blackmore. These are, of course, the merest outlines; the other personages and the various incidents of the story, such as murders, thrilling adventures, hairbreadth escapes, heroic exploits,—virtue triumphant, villany defeated, et cætera, et cætera, I will work in as they shall appear in the aforesaid novels."

"A novel way of writing one, certainly," laughed Levison. "But Louise will be sure to detect the plagiarisms."

"I will take good care to guard against that," said Hilton, "as I shall select only the oldest and least-read novels I can find; such as 'Clarissa Harlowe,' 'Sir Charles Grandison,' 'The Mysteries of Udolpho,' 'Cecilia,' 'The Italian,' and other antiquated rubbish of that sort. To be sure, Louise admires the romantic and sentimental, and has read a good deal of such stuff, but I don't believe she ever waded through any of those. Of course, I shall ask her advice on certain points, and read the story to her before it is printed."

"A most wise precaution, my dear fellow," remarked Levison, with a touch of sly humor in his tone; "otherwise she may never be made aware of its existence."

"Reserve your jokes,—at least till after the event, my dear boy," retorted Hilton. "And as for my confidence in regard to that, you have my offer of a bet of a hundred to fifty."

"And do you really mean to tell me in all seriousness, Jack," asked Levison, "that you think you can write that story out and get it published within the short space of one month. And, besides, there is another difficulty in the way. The publishers would be sure to detect the imposition."

"Pshaw! publishers are used to such thefts."

"But, then, other authors may read your book and expose you. Besides, the critics would mercilessly tear you to pieces."

"Authors only read their own works. And as for the critics, the more abused a book is the more it is read. It is the very best way to advertise it, and insure it a larger circulation."

"For a man who professes not to be literary," remarked Levison, laughing, "you seem to have a pretty good knowledge of the experiences of publishers, the habits of authors, and the effects of criticism. Nevertheless, I fear your scheme is altogether too chimerical; but you have my best wishes for your success all the same. And in the mean while I will take up your bet. A hundred to fifty I think you said."

"With one proviso," said Hilton. "And that is that I am not ordered to march before the expiration of the time

named. If those rascally red-skins only behave themselves, and refrain from a breach of the peace for the next five weeks, I can have my leave of absence extended for that length of time, I am sure."

"Love and war are pretty serious matters, Jack; aren't they?" said Levison. "Bad enough when taken separately; but when they get mixed up together—— Well, one may damage the body, but it is quite sure that the other plays very havoc with a fellow's wits."

"Ah, Charlie," said Hilton, sententiously, "'the lord of the unerring bow' will some day transfix your heart with one of his fatal shafts. You will then feel less inclined to ridicule *la grande passion.*"

"Perhaps. In the mean time I shall remain in full enjoyment of my liberty, and my—wits," observed Levison. "'The lord of the unerring bow!' That is good. You get that out of Byron; so it seems you do dip into poetry sometimes."

"Oh, I'm not quite such an ignoramus, in that respect, as perhaps Louise thinks I am; and I shall soon force her to confess that she has done me great injustice in accusing me of having no poetry or sentiment in my soul," said Hilton. "And now that you know it, what do you think of my scheme?"

"What do I think of it? One word in parting, my dear boy," replied Levison, in a tone of unmingled humor and mock seriousness, as he rose from his seat, "which, as your sincere friend and well-wisher, I feel it my duty to speak. Remember Marc Antony, Hercules, and Omphale, and the lion in love. They all yielded to the seduction of your 'grande passion.' And what then became of their prowess? Under the baleful influence of this same 'grande passion,' the first threw away a throne, the second laid aside his club for a distaff, and the third tamely submitted to having his teeth and nails extracted. As Jack Bunsby would remark, 'the bearings of this observation lays in the application on it.' *Verbum satis sapientis.*"

"Oh, bother your mythological rubbish! Can't you be serious for once in your life, Charlie?" cried Hilton. "'I confide in you as a supposed sympathetic friend, and I find you a veritable Job's comforter?'"

"Believe me, Jack, I wish you all the success in the world," responded Levison. "I'll drop in upon you in a day or two to learn how you are progressing. And—let me see," pausing a moment by the open door, "a hundred to fifty, I think you said."

II.

IMMEDIATELY after his friend's departure, Hilton set about his arduous task, or what might be more properly called his labor of love. With the books obtained from the public library, and others borrowed from a few of his friends, he was soon in possession of the working material from which was to arise the wonderful superstructure that was destined (as his rosy imagination pictured it to him) to win for him the hand of the obdurate and fickle Louise, and perhaps lay the foundation of his future fame and fortune. How happy and proud he would feel when he would have the right to say, "Louise, I *am* an author," and to behold her soft blue eyes turned upon his with a look of mingled surprise, love, and admiration, and hear her exclaim in tones of unfeigned rapture, "Now, Jack, I am thine. Take me!"

In order to be free from interruption he confined himself within the strict privacy of his own room, and denied himself, upon the plea of indisposition, to all callers; where he would write nearly all day and often far into the night. Not to make his transformation into a full-fledged author appear too sudden, Hilton, like some skilful tactician or wary general, bent upon the capture of some important stronghold, made his advances towards the purpose he had in view with all due precaution. Upon those evenings which he spent with Louise he would deftly turn the conversation on literary topics,—no very difficult thing to do,—and descant, in an animated way, upon the beauties of literature in general, and those of Byron and Moore in particular. Indeed, the extent and fervor of his newly-awakened admiration for her own two favorite poets equally

gratified and delighted Louise. She was endowed in a higher than ordinary degree with fine literary abilities and discriminative powers, and was at times a most unmerciful critic. She disliked Browning and laughed at Walt Whitman. They did not belong to the romantic school of poets. Kipling's themes were distasteful to her; Tennyson and Longfellow, she thought, might pass, though neither was comparable, in point of interest, to Scott; but what any one who could revel in the beauties of Byron and Moore and Shelley and Keats might find to admire in the two first-mentioned poets she couldn't imagine; and more than once, when she was indulging in a merciless dissection of their respective faults and shortcomings, as they appeared to her, did a cold shiver run through poor Hilton at the thought of the farrago of nonsense that he had designed to prepare for her especial delectation.

But he had soon decided not to adhere too closely to his original plan. In the ardor of his love he had been dazzled, as it appeared to him, by the brilliancy of his conception; but when it began to pale in the calm, clear light of reason, he could not fail to become impressed with the utter absurdity of the idea. He would only avail himself of such ideas and suggestions as might be presented in the novels, and trust to whatever powers of originality or ingenuity he might possess to maintain at least some semblance of uniformity of plan and plot, incorporating verbatim into his work only such passages as should be consistent with such purpose. This would, of course, necessitate more time and labor; but with the end in view this was nothing. Whether this would prove more satisfactory or not the result could alone determine. And now another step in the pursuance of his plan must be taken.

The next time he called upon Louise he artfully led her into a discussion upon poetry, during which he slyly intimated that he had himself once courted the Muse, and confessed to having written several poems and dainty little sonnets to the object of his affections,—when he was quite young and didn't know any better; some of which, however, had been considered worthy of a place in the columns of a country newspaper. He furthermore admitted that he had written several stories,—he didn't know but that one

of them might be called a regular novel. This had been published in a Sunday paper, and highly praised by a number of his friends. He hadn't, of course, written anything lately, as his professional duties required all his time and attention; but he had never lost his early love for the poetic muse, and only regretted that he could no longer be her devoted slave. But perhaps—well, he didn't know—he might again yield to the promptings of the—the—the divine afflatus, which he felt at times very strong upon him, and—and write something more. He hadn't, of course, said anything of all this to her before, because—well, he probably hadn't thought it of sufficient importance; or—which was the more likely—because he had forgotten all about it. (Deliberate falsehoods, every one of them. But Cupid slyly winks and laughs at all such subterfuges; and the old adage justifies them.)

If Hilton had hoped to make a highly favorable impression upon Louise by these tender little confidences, he must have felt some disappointment at the way in which they were received. She laughingly remarked that she supposed all school-boys wrote poetry, and that many other children of a larger growth, whose years should have taught them discretion, were afflicted with the complaint known as the cacoethes scribendi. Poor Hilton; he was committing the same indiscretion himself, and perhaps only to be laughed at for all his pains,—the thought was dreadfully discouraging. But he tried to comfort himself with the reflection that Louise's words had always been, "Jack, if you were only an author;" and with that fact once established, she might not, perhaps, be disposed to be over-critical in regard to the quality or character of his work. "Only an author." Well, he would be one; and that was all she had wished.

But he now felt that he must lead her on to speak more particularly upon the subject of prose fiction. He desired—for reasons not at all difficult to understand—to ascertain the extent of her reading in that direction, and who were her favorite novelists.

"Louise," he remarked, in a careless tone, shortly after he had opened the discussion, "I suppose you don't care much about old-fashioned novels; those, I mean, which were written about a hundred years ago. I know you ad-

mire sentiment, spirited action, romantic situations, and all that, but then, of course, you would never think of reading such antiquated stuff as 'The Mysteries of Udolpho,' 'The Italian,' or 'Clarissa Harlowe,' or books of that sort."

"'The Mysteries of Udolpho,'" replied Louise, "was my especial delight when I was a child; and you may laugh, but I could read it even now, though I remember nearly every word of it."

Poor Hilton; he didn't feel much like laughing. No; anything but that. He had that very morning incorporated nearly an entire chapter of that work into his own novel.

"And the others, Louise," stammered Hilton, "the—the—'Clarissa Harlowe,' 'The Italian,' or 'Sir Charles Grandison,' or—or——"

"Oh, yes," said Louise, "I have read them all; some of them twice over. In fact, there are very few modern novels I care at all about. Especially these so-called realistic novels; those of Howells and James, for instance, I think dreadfully insipid. We don't care for reading about people whom one may meet in the street every day. I don't take the slightest interest in the sayings or doings of such ordinary, humdrum folks."

"No; certainly not," said Hilton, brightening up a little; "neither do I. Your tastes are more for the romantic and the heroic; the—the love and glory style. But, of course, Louise, you have quite forgotten all about those stories, or most of them, which—which charmed your youth. Indeed, who could remember anything in novels that were spun out into six or a dozen volumes?"

"I am happily blessed with a very good memory," she replied, "and generally remember nearly all of what I read. Those books, I mean, which have particularly interested me."

Hilton wished in the very depths of his soul that Nature had been less lavish of her gifts—the one at least of which she had spoken—when dealing with Louise. But, despite these discouragements, he determined to persevere to the bitter end. His work had now progressed too far for him to entertain, for a moment, a thought of abandoning it. But what if, after all, he should fail to find a publisher for

it? Even should Louise approve his work, and reward him with her sweetest smiles, and warmest words of praise and encouragement, and even extol his genius, what kind of opinion might she not be induced to entertain, upon sober second thoughts, of a writer who could find no publisher sufficiently impressed with the merits of his work to introduce it to the public? In that case, could he claim to be an author at all? And then all his labor would go for nothing. He also began to harbor a suspicion that he had possibly, in the first exuberance of his feelings, allowed himself to indulge in too roseate and hopeful a view of the final issue of his scheme. And the mere idea of writing a novel, at least forty-two chapters long, hunting up a publisher, and getting his book out, all within a month's time, now struck him as being so supremely absurd that he could hardly resist the conviction that he had made an egregious fool of himself. But these various reflections he did not suffer to dampen in the least the ardor of his pursuit. He would still persevere, for his happiness and peace of mind were so deeply involved in the stake at issue that he could not for a moment think of desisting from his purpose. And Fate—so he flattered himself—had decreed that he must go on to final triumph or defeat.

He derived, moreover, as time went, renewed hope and encouragement from thinking that he could perceive a marked change in Louise. She appeared more glad to see him; to derive greater pleasure from his society, and to be more uniformly gracious in her manner towards him; though, apparently, she entertained no suspicion of the real motive that actuated him. Once, when recalling those early courtings of the Muse, the imaginary juvenile efforts, of which he had made previous confession, he came very near betraying his secret. "What would you think, Louise," he had said, with a laugh, "if I should turn author again? You know you have often expressed the wish that I were one."

"What would I think, Jack?" she replied, laughing herself. "I fear that I should be compelled to think, and also to say, that you had not mistaken your calling. That the profession of arms was the proper sphere for the display of your activities, and that you were far better qualified

to achieve distinction upon the field of Mars than in futile dalliance with the Muse in the courts of poesy."

"And yet, Louise," said Hilton, earnestly, "you know that distinguished soldiers have achieved fame as authors. I could cite several who have gained brilliant reputations from the books they have written. And why not——?" But he would say no more. The time had not yet come for him to burst upon the astonished and delighted Louise in the full splendor of a literary glory that was destined to throw even the illustrious author of a "Ben Hur" into the shade.

His friend Charlie Levison had called once or twice, but he had found Hilton entirely too much engrossed with his work and impressed with the importance of every moment he could devote to it to waste any time in social amenities; so his visits had been very brief.

"Remember, old fellow," he said, on leaving him one morning, "one week more and the month will be up. Within this time your book must appear."

"I said in the hands of a publisher within a month," responded Hilton.

"No, you didn't," said Levison. "It is evident you are trying to hedge."

"It can't be done," said Hilton. "We will have to call it that."

"I won't accept the amendment," Levison replied, with a laugh. "The original bet must stand."

"All right; but the time isn't up yet. When it is, we'll talk about it. Drop in one week from to-day, and you shall hear what I have written."

Under the stimulus of his all-absorbing passion, Hilton had proved a most indefatigable worker. Early and late he labored away at his task, and in time had the satisfaction to behold his novel assuming quite formidable dimensions. But his work had been by no means entirely manual. Often he would lay his pen down and wrestle mentally with some knotty problem; and they were neither few nor easy of solution. Had he undertaken, indeed, an altogether original composition, he might have found his work much less difficult. He believed, or willingly persuaded himself into the belief, however, that he had main-

tained a sufficient consistency and thread of connection throughout his story, which, as a set task, the most ingenious and experienced author would, no doubt, have pronounced to be simply impossible. But his method was peculiarly his own, and if the result should prove to be not altogether what he had hoped for, he could console himself at least with the reflection that it was not so from his having failed to do his very best under the circumstances. He knew also that authors had sometimes made curious mistakes ; and if he made a few more than they had, he could at least plead some distinguished precedents. Besides, he was quite a young author ; it was his maiden effort ; the public and the critics would be more lenient on that account, and not disposed to judge him too harshly.

And what if he should at first fail to find a publisher for his story? Would he not but undergo the experience of numberless other authors whose merits the publishers, strangely blind to their own interests, either could or would not see ; and had not some of these authors, shamefully neglected at first and often contemptuously refused even a hearing, afterwards risen to the full noontide splendor of literary fame?

And again, what if his remuneration should be small? Did not Milton receive but a paltry ten pounds for his immortal epic ; and others who might be named, the scant recognition of whose merits, pecuniarily considered, was far below their just deserts? Poor Hilton ! he had indulged in a bright and happy dream ; and, as in other cases, was he, perhaps, only destined to an early and bitter awakening?

One fear had troubled him at times, which was that he might be ordered to join his regiment before he had completed his work, in which case his project would have to be indefinitely postponed.

But as the days went by without this apprehension being realized, and he had nearly ended his sixth week of labor, he now felt entirely confident that he would have sufficient time to finish it. And in a day or two more this would be accomplished.

III.

THE last word had been written. His *magnum opus*—the crowning triumph of six weeks' unremitting labor—was finished, and Hilton threw himself back in his chair with a profound sigh of relief. Never, perhaps, did author view with fonder hope or brighter anticipation his first literary offspring than did he the goodly piles of manuscript that lay before him; and to-night—he trembled at the thought—would he know whether that hope was to be realized or cruelly disappointed, and melt away, like the baseless fabric of a vision, into thin air.

Levison called upon him, by appointment, in the morning to hear portions of his story read, for Hilton was desirous of first obtaining his friend's opinion, and of noting the impression that it made upon him. So lighting their cigars and seating themselves comfortably in their chairs, Hilton with a markedly sober and serious expression, and Levison with a highly amused and expectant look, as if anticipating a rare treat, the former gathered together a number of the loose sheets of his manuscript and arranged them in order preparatory to reading.

"I suppose it doesn't make much difference where you begin," remarked Levison.

"I will give you a number of extracts," said Hilton. "You don't suppose I'm going to read the whole thing through to you, do you?"

Seeing that his friend was, apparently, in no mood for joking, Levison tried hard to assume a serious air, but his sense of the ludicrous getting for a moment the better of him, he could not refrain from saying in a slightly deprecatory tone, "I hope not, indeed, old fellow. But begin where you please," he added. "As the thing has neither head nor tail to it—a sort of nondescript monster, you know—it makes no kind of difference, of course."

"The chapters are necessarily somewhat short," said Hilton, not noticing his friend's slyly humorous thrust, "on account of the extent of ground I had to cover; but I will begin with these two, which are the longest."

As the reading progressed, Levison tried hard not to laugh. He would, perhaps, have found it difficult to say which

amused him most, Hilton's perfectly serious and earnest manner, or the highly ludicrous character of the matter to which he listened. He had to pinch himself severely, on the sly, several times in order to maintain a becomingly solemn expression and to manifest a (literally) painful interest in those passages which were intended to be especially pathetic and soul-harrowing, and thus repress any tendency to a risibility that otherwise he might have found it impossible not to betray. As an offset to this, however, he relieved himself by giving full vent to his mirth over passages of a designedly ludicrous nature; though he would have found it hard to tell which one indeed of those he had heard read might not have been justly entitled to such a character.

When Hilton had finished, Levison exclaimed, "Capital! First rate! Couldn't have done better myself. But it does seem a little strange now, doesn't it, that the wicked old Lord Melville, who was so unmistakably murdered by those four ruffians at the instigation of his much-abused and long-suffering old wife,—so unquestionably dead and buried,—should have turned up alive and smiling in the next chapter, as the husband of the youthful and virtuous Ethelinda, and who was old enough to be her great-grandfather?"

"I may have got mixed up a little in some places," replied Hilton. "But you know such discrepancies appear sometimes in novels; in fact, in the works of nearly all writers. None are infallible."

"By the way, what is the title of your book?" asked Levison.

"The title? By Jove! I never thought about that," exclaimed Hilton. "I'm glad you mentioned it. Let me see——"

"Why not," suggested his friend, "as your novel is of a sort of nondescript character, you know, take a hint from Wilkie Collins, and call it No Name."

"Not original; besides being altogether too prosaic."

"I should hardly suppose," observed Levison, in a slightly humorous tone, "that such a trifling little matter as a lack of originality would trouble you very much."

"I have it!" cried Hilton, as if illuminated by a sudden

ray of inspiration. "I will call it Love and Glory. That will catch Louise's fancy right off."

"Well," said his friend, rising from his seat, "I have not the slightest doubt that your novel will make a marked impression upon her. But, my dear fellow, hadn't you better number your pages? You may get them mixed up, and that, you know, might prove—confusion worse confounded. But I must be off. If agreeable to you I will drop in to-morrow to learn the result. And," he added, pausing a moment after he had opened the door, "I believe it was—wasn't it—in one month's time, and a hundred to fifty? Good-by."

But Hilton was not to have the pleasure of reading his story to Louise that night. Levison's prediction of the possible consequence of his friend's having neglected to number his pages had unfortunately come true; for in collecting the loose sheets together he had found them so badly mixed up (though Levison would probably have told him, in his aggravatingly humorous way, that could have made no possible kind of difference) that it required the remainder of that and the greater part of the next day to bring order out of chaos, which was attended with about as much difficulty as a novice in the art would experience from his first attempt to put together the various ingeniously-constructed pieces of a Chinese puzzle. He finished his task at last, however, and having numbered and divided the sheets into several separate packages, and thus duly prepared, he took his way to the home of Louise.

He found her seated in the library, and, fortunately, alone. She was writing at a small table in one corner, with an open book lying before her, but rose upon Hilton's entrance, and gave him a cordial welcome. She appeared, indeed, to be in an especially gracious mood, which he was disposed to regard as a happy augury. He wanted to break the ice as soon as possible and take the first plunge; but he did not know exactly how to begin.

"Composing a poem, Louise?" he said, with a smile, observing the nature of her occupation.

"A mere trifle that I have just dashed off," she replied. "It is a translation of an Italian love-song, or serenade. You shall hear it, and give me your opinion of it." She

took the paper from the table, and read, in a clear, full, musical voice, as follows:

"As on the dusky brow of night
One solitary gem
Pales with its rays each lesser light
In her broad diadem,

"So come thou forth, my soul's desire!
And thy bright eye of love
Shall shame the ineffectual fire
Of those dim orbs above.

"As the sweet moon, with modest gaze
Upon the limpid stream,
Beholds within its liquid rays
Her own reflected beam,

"So thou, my star, serene and fair!
Shalt view within this breast,
In brighter rays reflected there,
Thine image deep impressed.

"To thee I now attune my lute,
My pleading voice I raise;
Surely thine own will not be mute
My song to blame, or praise.

"I do but ask a word of thee,
A whisper, or a sigh;
If it breathe not of love for me,
Then, hapless, I shall die."

"Beautiful! Exquisite!" exclaimed Hilton, enthusiastically. "Such tender sentiment! Such melting pathos! And now, Louise," he added, in a slightly hesitating voice, "I should like to—to—have you listen to a—a composition of mine."

"I should be delighted to, I'm sure," she responded, graciously, eying with a partly curious and amused look the several packages of manuscript of which Hilton now divested his pockets and laid on the table in the middle of the room.

"What may be the subject and title of your poem?" she asked.

"It is not a poem," he replied, "but a novel, entitled Love and Glory. And before I place it in the hands of a

publisher I wish you to hear it, and offer such suggestions, by way of improvement, as you may think advisable."

The idea of Hilton's appearing in the *rôle* of an author afforded Louise not a little amusement. "You have kept your secret well, Jack," she said; "but I should have thought you would have sought my valuable advice while at work upon your novel. It might have saved you some trouble."

"The truth is, Louise, I wanted to—to give you a little surprise."

"You have certainly done that," she observed, with a laugh, "for I never should have thought that you, who—but I won't begin to criticise you before I have heard your story."

"I want your candid opinion, Louise. And I hope you will not allow your native sense of politeness to get the better of your judgment."

"You need have no fear of that; for I assure you that you will find me a most impartial critic."

She pushed her book and writing materials to one side of the table, and reclining comfortably back in her chair, waited for Hilton to begin.

He picked up one of the packages, untied it, and after glancing over the pages to see that it was the right one, began to read in a clear, steady voice, Louise meanwhile maintaining an air of close attention and an unbroken silence.

The first chapter contained a somewhat elaborate description of an ancient English baronial hall of the time of James the First, which he had copied verbatim out of an old novel. The second was devoted to an account of the appearance, manners, and habits of life of its noble proprietor, the Baron of Broadlands, his two lovely and accomplished daughters, the ladies Elfrida and Ethelinda, the names alone being changed, and their respective lovers, also purloined from the same source; and the third gave a description of a grand tournament gotten up by the aforesaid lovers for the especial delectation of their respective mistresses, for which he had drawn heavily from "Ivanhoe," making only such changes as seemed advisable, but into which he had committed the anachronism of introducing as the

victor a valiant knight and trusty follower of Richard the First,—the incidents of his story being supposed to occur within the first half of the seventeenth century,—retaining, even through inadvertency, his very name.

All had been plain sailing up to this point; but in the fourth chapter the complications commenced, and the plot began, literally, to thicken. The scene changed to a lonely and ruinous old tower on the Rhine, in one of whose upper rooms sat a dark-visaged and repulsive-looking man deeply brooding over some wrong he had suffered, in some unexplained way connected with the Baron of Broadlands, and in whose blood he very audibly and ferociously expressed his intention of imbruing his hands. Several times, indeed, he breathed forth slaughter and destruction upon the whole family, including the lovers, and devoted to irremediable ruin the baron's entire fortune and estates.

Leaving him to his gloomy meditations and sanguinary resolves, the reader was now transported, with all the ease and celerity of the enchanted carpet in the story, to a wild and desolate moor in Yorkshire; and there suddenly appears upon the scene an honest old farmer, one Obadiah Dumbedykes; though whence he came, or for what purpose, or why, indeed, he should have come at all, is not made apparent. He is first seen wending his way slowly and thoughtfully over the moor, pausing at times, sighing deeply, and occasionally shedding a tear, and mumbling to himself. "He was thinking," to quote the words of the novel as Hilton read, "of that luckless morning when he discovered at the bottom of his well, as he supposed, the gory head and one of the fingers of the Lady Blanche Melville, who was barbarously murdered by her husband in an uncontrollable fit of passion, and who afterwards cut her up into small pieces and distributed her promiscuously about the neighborhood; but who, on a closer examination, discovered them to be the head and finger of his own daughter, who had eloped from the paternal roof twenty years before with some gay Lothario, and of whom nothing had ever been heard until the grief-stricken father had thus brought to light the ghastly remnants of his long-lost and beloved child."

Up to this time Louise had preserved strict silence; but

here, not a little to Hilton's astonishment and discomfiture, she broke into a loud laugh.

He had regarded this as one of his most touching and pathetic passages, and he could not help feeling a little nettled, to say the least, at the way in which it was received.

"Perhaps you think that's funny," he remarked.

"Awfully," she replied. "But forgive me, Jack," she added, in a tone of contrition. "I promise not to offend again. But, how did those things get into the well?"

"That's for you to surmise. You don't suppose an author is bound to explain everything, and leave nothing to the imagination of the reader? If he did, what would become of all the mysteries in the story?"

Hilton resumed his reading, and now entered upon his fifth chapter, in which, after disposing of Obadiah Dumbedykes by making him disappear as mysteriously as he had come, he returns again to the baronial hall of Broadlands.

But a sad change had come over the fortunes of some of its inmates. The fair Ethelinda is sorely persecuted by the attentions of the old and wicked, but immensely rich, Lord Melville, who, unknown to her, has a wife living in a distant part of the country. Her lover has been waylaid and carried off none know whither, though more than suspected to be the work of agents of his rival, the wicked old lord. The lover of Elfrida has also to confront a rival suitor in the person of the Earl of Loch Lomond, a young Scotch nobleman, by whom, for a gross insult offered to him, he is challenged to mortal combat and run through the body, expiring shortly after in the arms of his second. After three times endeavoring unsuccessfully to poison herself, Elfrida finally resolves upon becoming a nun, and, accordingly, enters the convent of Saint Theresa in Italy, the Lady Superior of which happens to be her maternal aunt. And here followed a rather unnecessarily minute description of the convent itself, and the mode of life of its inmates, for which Hilton was indebted to several solid pages of "The Abbess."

In the beginning of the sixth chapter, a stranger arrives at the hall late one stormy night, and demands immediate audience of the baron, mysteriously intimating that his

business is of a highly important nature, and will admit of no delay. On being admitted to the presence of the baron, he introduces himself by the name of Jean Gaspard ; and, from the style of his dress, general air, and the peculiarly sinister and forbidding aspect of his countenance, has all the look of a professional cut-throat. He informs the baron that he is the possessor of a secret of the utmost importance to him, in which not only his daughter's happiness, but the honor of his family, is involved. This secret he offers to sell to the baron for a satisfactory consideration, which he names. But, considering the price exorbitant, his would-be purchaser refuses to pay it, and after wrangling over the matter some little time, they compromise for half the amount. He then discloses to the baron the fact that Lord Melville, the suitor for his daughter's hand, already has a wife living in England ; but, not doubting that he must be greatly desirous of promoting so highly advantageous a match, pecuniarily considered, and allying himself, matrimonially, with so illustrious a house as that of Lord Melville's, he offers for a further consideration to remove the old lady to the farthest wilds of Siberia, or through the quicker and surer means of poison.

This proposition the baron receives in high dudgeon. His sense of honor is outraged, to say nothing of the ordinary instincts of humanity, and in a sudden spasm of virtuous indignation he unceremoniously kicks his visitor out of the room. Thus ignominiously repulsed, the latter takes his departure, giving vent to a frightful explosion of Gallic oaths, and vowing dire vengeance upon the baron and his entire family.

Lord Melville, being confronted shortly after by the baron with the charge of being already married, vehemently denies it, and engages to convince him of its falsity. He takes leave of his host for the purpose of procuring, as he says, the necessary evidence to the truth of his words, but with the secret intention of going immediately home and murdering his wife in cold blood, and thus removing the obstacle that stands in the way of the gratification of his wishes. The old lady has stolen a march upon him, however ; for, having suffered long enough, she makes up her mind, from his brutality and infidelities, she hires four

ruffians to rid her of such a monster; and, in consequence, Lord Melville, when about two miles from home, is waylaid and barbarously butchered.

IV.

"PARDON me, Jack," said Louise, as he made a pause here, "but—I don't quite understand. No doubt it is my own stupidity, but I somehow got the impression that Lord Melville had already murdered his wife. And—I should like to know whether this Jean Gaspard is in any way connected with the man in the tower on the Rhine, mentioned in a former chapter."

"I—I am afraid," replied Hilton, seeming a little confused, "that—that I have misplaced the chapters; a simple mistake in numbering them, but which I can easily correct."

"Or you might," suggested Louise, in a slyly humorous tone, "leave the reader to infer that it was a former wife he had murdered."

"A brilliant idea, certainly," laughed Hilton, in reply, "but I think I had better make the needed corrections. And, besides, I may have got the cart before the horse in other places. It would be best, I think, to look the story carefully over before I read any further."

"But, Jack, as Lord Melville has certainly been murdered, and before he had the opportunity of performing the office of executioner himself, I think you had better omit the fourth chapter altogether, as your honest old farmer Dumbedykes seems to be a somewhat incongruous element in the story. But read two or three chapters more, and we will then adjourn the entertainment to a future occasion."

In compliance with her request Hilton read the three chapters following. In the first one the abducted lover of Ethelinda turns up as the leader of banditti among the romantic wilds of the Apennines. A description of the scenery is given,—verbatim from "The Mysteries of Udolpho,"—followed by a brief account of the cave and habits

of life of the robbers. In one of their excursions the band captures three or four stray nuns, who have wandered too far away from their convent and become lost among the fastnesses of the mountains. The leader is about to appropriate to himself, as his share of the booty, the best-looking one of the lot, when to his astonishment he recognizes in her the sister of his long-lost but still beloved Ethelinda. Mutual explanations follow. He learns of the death of his former hated rival,—though how she came by the information does not appear,—but believing he has forever lost the object of his affections, he makes honorable love to Elfrida, and urges her to become a sort of Maid Marian to the band. Weary of the confinement and dull routine of her convent life, she gladly accedes to his proposals, and the day is set for their wedding.

But, unfortunately, the old love is still strong upon him. He is assured that Ethelinda still lives; that he has nothing more to fear from the machinations of an all-powerful rival, and he is animated by a new-born hope that she may yet be his. These reflections, and the overpowering desire awakened by them, gain at length such complete mastery over him that upon the night preceding the day fixed for his marriage he mysteriously disappears, to the surprise and consternation of his followers and the grief and chagrin of the deceived and abandoned Elfrida, who, rather than return again to her convent, accepts shortly after the offer of the next highest in command, and thus consoles herself for the loss of her treacherous lover.

The next chapters give an account of what befell the lover of Ethelinda from the time of his desertion of the banditti and the hapless Elfrida to that of his arrival at the old Hall of Broadlands. He performs prodigies of valor, rescuing numerous distressed damsels from perilous situations; liberating captive maidens from enchanted castles, where they have been kept in confinement by wicked one-eyed ogres and ferocious three-headed giants and other chimerical monsters; encounters and puts to flight with his single arm numberless bands of robbers who assail him in lonely and gloomy forests; slays two or three dragons which vomit out at him fire, smoke, and brimstone; and, finally, saves a forlorn and beautiful damsel from the hands

of an abhorred lover, who is carrying her off, by deftly cutting him in two with a single stroke of his sword. Her beauty and distress having first awakened his sympathy and compassion, he is soon sensible of a still warmer emotion arising within him, and pity yielding the supremacy to love, he becomes hopelessly enamoured of her. But he thinks of Ethelinda, and endeavors to suppress his newly-awakened passion for the beautiful Ermingarde. But, unfortunately, she reciprocates his love, and declares with fervent and grateful lips and tears in her soft blue eyes that she will never leave her valiant and handsome deliverer. His various exploits prove him to be, indeed, a veritable second Amadis de Gaul, Orontes, or Palmerin, and like the true knights-errant which they were, he is still faithful to his one, peerless dulcinea; and this resolution, he fears, if persisted in, may necessitate some awkward explanations, and lead to yet more disagreeable complications when he meets his mistress accompanied by this beautiful stranger. He therefore tells her that she must don the habit of a page, assigning another reason than the true one; which she immediately proceeds to do,—though as to whence the garb comes or by whom provided the reader is not enlightened,—and so they travel on towards England, where they arrive without molestation or further adventure three weeks after. For most of which foregoing particulars Hilton was indebted to an old romance of chivalry.

On reaching the Hall the lover—whose name, by the way, happens to be Sir Percy Wyndham—is horrified by the intelligence that the baron was, about a year before, found foully murdered in his bed one morning. His head had been cut off, the rest of his body dismembered, and the various limbs laid out upon the bed with all the neatness and dexterity of some accomplished Jack the Ripper of the seventeenth century. Ethelinda, despairing of ever again beholding the lover of her youth, had become the wife of a certain old Lord Merrivale,—Hilton had inadvertently written it Melville, but Levison's criticism had enabled him to make the correction,—and upon seeing Sir Percy faints away in his arms just as her husband enters the room. Rage and astonishment at witnessing so unlooked-for a spectacle takes full possession of him. He

storms, swears, and demands an instant explanation all in one breath. Sir Percy, equal to the emergency, declares himself to be her long-lost brother. He gracefully accepts the explanation, apologizes for the rudeness of his behavior, shakes the young man cordially by the hand, and welcomes him back to England. But alas for the fickleness of woman! Ethelinda, at first charmed by the youthful grace and beauty of her lover's page, who is her master's almost constant attendant, soon falls desperately in love with Ermingarde. Not failing to notice Ethelinda's somewhat changed manner towards him and the apparent abatement in the warmth of her love, and discovering, moreover, that she has lost much of her early beauty, Sir Percy begins to cool off himself. The inevitable consequence follows. He soon transfers all his affections to his page, and arranges for a secret marriage with her, not a little rejoiced, indeed, at the turn which affairs have taken. And here—with the prospect of still greater complications in sight—Hilton ended his reading.

Louise thanked him; said she had found his story extremely amusing, and that as a literary mosaic it was certainly without a rival.

"Literary mosaic?" What covert insinuation might she design to convey by those words? Could she more than half suspect the truth? And "extremely amusing." He had intended his story to be more than merely amusing; to make it exciting, thrilling; an excitant to the higher and nobler emotions. And now to hear it spoken of as if it had been a purely humorous work,—it was not a little discouraging, certainly. But he screwed up enough courage to say, "And now, Louise, judging from what you have heard read of the story, do you feel competent to express an opinion, and tell me how you think it will strike the public? I desire your candid opinion."

With inward fear and trembling he awaited her reply; but as she remained silent several moments—which he was quick to construe as a somewhat unfavorable omen—he added, hastily, "But, Louise, perhaps you would prefer to hear it all before expressing an opinion. And I think myself that would be best."

Poor Hilton! in his gloomy foreboding his feelings were

not altogether unlike those which a condemned criminal might be supposed to experience when pleading for a brief stay in the execution of his sentence.

"I will act upon the suggestion," replied Louise, whose keen sense of the ludicrous had been stimulated to an unwonted degree, and who had really found no little enjoyment in its secret gratification. "You may leave the manuscript, and to-morrow you shall have the candid opinion that you desire." And with this promise Hilton shortly after took his leave.

The next evening but one—an unforeseen detention had prevented his earlier appearance—he took his way with throbbing heart and mingled emotions of hope and apprehension to the home of his beloved. She received him in the library with all that graciousness of manner which she knew so well how to assume upon occasions, and which had the effect of brightening Hilton up a little, though he could not resist the feeling that if the issue of his suit was to be determined by the fate of his story, he had little if anything to hope for.

But he put a brave face on the matter; assumed a cheerful and even gay air, exchanged a number of pleasantries with Louise, and then asked her, in a jocular manner, if she was ready to pass judgment upon him; though the poor fellow, if he had actually seen transcribed over her door Dante's famous lines above the portal of the Inferno, could scarcely have felt more secret trepidation and misgiving.

"Yes," she replied; "I have read your story through, and will now, as you have requested, give you my candid opinion of it. In the first place, it is painfully lacking in coherence and originality; two very serious, if not fatal, defects in any work of fiction. But to be more definite,"—her manner was becoming severe and her tone icy,—"the situations are in the main forced, most of the characters are grotesquely unnatural; the language extremely stilted, and frequently disconnected and irrelevant,—you seem, in fact, to have borrowed isolated phrases or expressions from different sources and put them into the mouths of your own characters without regard to the proprieties of time, place, or occasion; some of which, indeed, have a very familiar

sound to me. You often become so hopelessly entangled in the intricacies of your plot—which in some instances seem to have not the remotest connection with or relation to each other—that you mix up characters, events, times, and places in utterly confusing and inextricable complications. Need I say more? No, Jack,—stick to the army. You will never make an author."

Poor Hilton! the airy fabric of his hopes and dreams had dissolved; shattered at one blow. And by the hand of her who had been its inspiration.

By a strong effort, however, he rallied himself, laughed, admitted the undoubted soundness of Louise's judgment, thanked her for her entire impartiality, and then carelessly remarked that he had, after all, only indulged in composition as a means of whiling away the time which might otherwise have hung heavily on his hands; that his having spoken to her about publishing it was, of course, a mere joke, as she must so have understood it, for he didn't suppose she thought him bereft of all sense. In short, he spoke and acted in a way which would convey the idea that he considered the whole thing merely as a temporary diversion, and of no real importance whatever.

Louise smiled, but made no pointed comment in reply, merely observing, "I hope, Jack, you don't think me too severe. I only gave you, you know, what you asked for."

"I am glad it amused you, however, Louise," said Hilton; "I have that satisfaction, at all events."

He soon turned the subject,—that of literature seeming for the moment to have somehow lost its charm for him,—and after conversing with her awhile upon different matters, he bid her good-night.

* * * * * * * *

The following morning Levison called upon his friend, and found him in his room, seated at a table which was strewn with books and loose sheets of writing-paper; the materials which had served his purpose and now become useless. His visage was solemn and his air grave. There was, indeed, an absent, far-away look in his eyes, as if he were entirely unconscious of his immediate surroundings; and it seemed to require not a little effort for him to realize the fact that his most esteemed friend and trusted confidant,

Charlie Levison, was standing before him, regarding him with a half-amused and half-sympathetic expression. He needed not to ask the question that was uppermost on his lips, for he read the answer in his friend's manner and looks.

"Well, old boy, where's your story?" he said, slapping him on the back to rouse him. He did not want to come to the direct question too abruptly; he would approach it by degrees.

"In the fire; or as much of it as isn't yet consumed is," replied Hilton, grimly. "The fact is, Charlie, I have made a confounded fool of myself; and that's all about it."

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed Levison, with a laugh, "you'll get over it. Try a poem next time. You may be more successful, and have fairer sailing on that tack. But wake up, old fellow, and tell me all about it. You're not going to withhold your confidence from me now, after having excited my curiosity thus far?"

"That's only fair, I suppose; but please excuse me now, Charlie; some other time."

"Well, Jack, you know faint heart never won fair lady yet. Take my advice: try a new tack, and trust to luck. But why don't you come to the point at once, without beating about the bush so?"

"I may take your advice," replied Hilton, "and try a new tack."

"The best tack for you, my boy," laughed Levison, "would be to tack-le her thus: My adorable Louise, will you accept of the hand and heart of your loving and devoted slave, Lieutenant John Randolph Hilton? A little formal, perhaps, but to the point."

"I could never survive the mortification of a refusal," said Hilton. "But I will think over what you have said,—and in the mean while, Charlie, here is my—promissory note for a hundred dollars, payable when I shall happen to be in possession of the requisite amount of funds."

WAUNA, THE WITCH-MAIDEN.

It was the season when the snow-caps of the Big Horn range melt and flow down into the valleys, forming icy torrents that wear the steep banks of the ravines until not even the horned sheep can scale them, and swelling the streams into impassable floods; when the tender shoots of the buffalo-grass, newly pushed upward through the barren sod, clothe the valleys and the slopes of the foot-hills with welcome verdure; when herds of buffalo, and bands of elk and antelope, emaciated by the hunger of the long winter, with teeth worn and mouths cracked and bleeding from grubbing the sandy roots of the dead grass, swarm on the hill-sides, and graze from morning till night without stopping for breath. At this season only the wolves and vultures prowl and hover about despondently, for the bones of the last frost-killed victim have been stripped, and the hunters have not yet made the annual descent upon the feeding-ground. Nature—the homely, barren Nature of the desert—smiles, for this is the season which gives the impulse to the pendulum of the years.

The Cheyennes, the Dakotas, the Shoshones, and the Crows had broken up their winter camps in the shelter of the mountains and were taking the trail, some for the hunt, some for war. If the buffalo-robes were worn and old, the teepee-poles cracked and broken, the bows, arrows, and lariats almost expended, it was necessary to march away with the entire tribe to some secluded valley among the foot-hills, and there by skill in hunting and curing hides and meats replenish the exhausted supply and provide a store in advance for less abundant seasons.

Only those whose meat was not yet consumed, whose ponies where fat, and whose bows and arrows were still abundant were permitted to go forth on the war-trail in paint and eagle-feathers to add deeds of prowess to the history of the tribe.

Before the streams had begun to swell, in the early

spring of this year, Gall, the chief of all the Dakotas, had sent forth runners to the tribes, commanding them to assemble upon the head-waters of the Greasy Grass. Several years of war, and one remarkable for a scarcity of buffalo, had reduced the nation to the verge of destitution. Another summer of war would cost many lives, and if it were followed by a winter without meat or robes, a plague could not be more fatal to the population. A hunt for the entire Dakota nation was therefore an urgent necessity. He had resolved to unite the tribes and conduct them under his own leadership to some country west of the Big Horns where there was plenty of game,—buffalo, deer, antelope, and elk, —to some region where Mineaska, the white man, had not yet found an abiding place. Where to go he knew not, but in some way the trail would be shown to him.

Very slowly the tribes converged upon the appointed place. The distances which separated the extreme ones were wide, and many days were necessary in which to overcome them. From the Lower Yellowstone, the Tongue, the Powder, the Rosebud, the Little Missouri, and the branches of the Belle Fourche the slow columns lazily approached. The runners which brought tidings of the start of each tribe had all come in, and by summing their reports Gall counted the number of his people as upward of six thousand. By the beginning of the month of June he must be ready to lead them to the hunting-grounds. The task was serious. Six thousand! It would indeed be difficult to provide game for so great a number.

Among the first to arrive was the tribe whose totem is the white wolf,—the Uncapapas. One of their number was a medicine-man named Sitting Bull, a sinister, crafty fellow, celebrated among his own people for the success which attended his auguries concerning the finding of game. Many, many summers had he led the tribe upon the hunting trail, returning with plenty and without encountering the enemy. He was a dreamer, and in his dreams he claimed that the Great Spirit pointed out to him whatsoever he desired to know. This claim was accepted among the Uncapapas as a fact beyond question. On the night of the next full moon after his arrival Gall summoned him to appear at his lodge for a medicine talk.

Just as the red disk of the moon was rising above the hills in the east, Sitting Bull struck upon the poles at the entrance of the lodge. He wore the usual garb of the medicine-men,—the tanned hide of a buffalo bull with the horns still intact on the base of the skull, falling down his back from the head to the foot; a string of grizzly bears' claws around the neck; a tom-tom of stretched wolf-skin, and a rattle made of rattlesnakes' tails attached around the border of a wild-cat's skin, hanging at the girdle. He stood upright and silent at the door of the lodge awaiting a response to his knocking.

"Enter, dreamer!" commanded the war chief in a stern voice.

The medicine-man pushed aside the matting which closed the entrance, and passing within, seated himself cross-legged facing the fire opposite the chief. The latter touched the bowl of his peace-pipe to the ground and turned the stem towards Sitting Bull. He seized it and blew forth clouds of smoke possessing a sickeningly sweet odor. No word was spoken until after several minutes the war chief broke the silence.

"Dreamer," he began, in measured syllables, "I am told that even in years of scarcity thou canst find hunting-grounds where game is plenty,—that thou hast spoken with the Great Spirit,—and that thou art a great medicine chief among thy people. On account of these reports I shall confide unto thee a great commission. I now command thee to lead my people, the Dakotas, into a land where the buffalo cow is plenty,—where the elk, the deer, and the antelope have not yet been cut down by the hunters. I have called my people together in this valley with their squaws, their papooses, their ponies, and their dogs,—six thousand souls,—and as yet they know not whether it is for peace or war. On the day after the next full moon, when the sun is high in the heavens, thou shalt lead them forth. From the top of yon high bluff thou shalt send the runners to guide my people. Take with thee the skin of the white wolf, the emblem of thy tribe. Let its presence keep alive in thy heart the memory of my commands. Go forth, and may the Great Spirit direct thee. Thou who art now the unknown dreamer of the Uncapapas shalt be-

come the great medicine chief of all the Dakotas. If thy skill endures the test, thy leadership shall prevail in war as well as in the chase. The war chief has commanded."

Sitting Bull closed his eyes and grasped the air as if invoking the aid of a spirit; then he shook the rattle and struck thrice upon the drum. He seized the white wolf-skin and tied it about his right arm above the elbow. The war chief extended again the stem of the peace-pipe. He placed it between his lips and blew dense volumes of smoke from his nostrils until the air of the lodge was darkened with it. Then extending his right arm upward to its full length, he rose, chanting,—

"Wauna! Wauna! Priestess of the thunder—the woods—the winds—the cataracts—the floods—the fire—the hail! Queen of the mighty beasts of the forest—the mountain—the prairie! Command thy servant!"

He crossed his hands upon his breast and bowed his head as if waiting an answer to his invocation. The fire leaping in the centre of the lodge cast yellow phosphorescence over the hardened outlines of his countenance. Fanaticism, cruelty, cunning, deceit, had all left their imprint there. At length he opened his eyes and extended his open palms over the head of the war chief.

"Great chief, thou art already obeyed. Sitting Bull, the dreamer, thy servant, the obscure medicine-man of the Uncapapas, will lead thy people into the land of plenty."

So saying, he gathered the folds of his robe around him, turned through the opening of the lodge, leaped upon his pony, and swept across the sea of wigwams to his own village.

The Peak of the Clouds was buried in the blackness of a stormy night. Heavy masses of dense vapor, carried by the wind, were discharging their thunderbolts against it, shattering the giant firs and tumbling the rocks in avalanches down the steep sides. Under the fallen trees and in the sheltered corners of the ravines the panthers crouched, trembling with fear. Torrents of rain, washing downward from the steep slopes, choked the water-ways of the cañons, and hurled heavy logs against the curves of the rugged banks like projectiles from a catapult.

In her cave, half-way up the mountain-side, dwelt Wauna,

the witch-maiden. As a cure for the chill and dampness of the air, she had piled heavy fagots deep upon the fire that burned in the depths of the cavern, and had set up on each side of the entrance a huge blazing knot of pitch-pine. The yellow light emblazoned the shining points of the walls, bringing them into sharper relief, relegating the depressions to obscurest blackness. The smoke of the burning fagots, borne by the draft from the entrance, disappeared into the throat of the dark recess which pierced the interior of the mountain.

Scattered promiscuously over the triangular-shaped floor were heaps of relics of the hunt and war-trail. Piles of dried meat, implements of stone, horn, and bone, saddles, moccasins, bead ornaments, bear-, buffalo-, and panther-skins lay upon the floor without effort at arrangement; while from poles that rested against the rocky sides dangled scalps of human hair and strings and festoons of elks' teeth and grizzly bears' claws. A raven perched near the entrance upon a pole laid horizontally between two uprights; and below, two coyotes, a prairie-dog, and a red fox tugged fretfully at their leashes. There was abundant evidence that the profession of sorceress, oracle, and general manager of human destinies was a profitable one.

The witch-maiden passed beyond the blazing pine-knots, and pushing back the tangled masses of her wiry hair, looked out through the mouth of the cave into the seething tempest that swept down the sides of the mountain. Each flash of lightning that lit the slanting forest with its vivid radiance was followed by rolling thunder that shook the very rocks. It was not likely that human beings could be abroad in such a storm. She shuffled back into the cave.

"The Great Spirit speaks in the clouds,—he is very near," she muttered. "I will discover his will for the Crow people,—the Absaraki."

She seized the thong which bound the leg of the raven and drew it struggling down from the perch. In front of the fire stood a flat slab of yellow stone. She knelt before it, and drew from her belt a sharp, round-edged knife of flint. Then holding the bird back downward on the rock, she deftly cut out its entrails, taking care not to sever them. The raven flapped its wings violently and uttered harsh,

painful croaks. Spreading the entrails over the surface of the rock, she watched them twist and turn, first into one figure, then into another.

"The omen is good," she exclaimed. Then drawing an arrow from a quiver on the floor, she spitted the bird upon it and held it, still struggling, in the flames of the fire. The flesh caught and burned quickly in the bright blaze.

"It is good, good. The Crows will go upon the hunting trail and will find much game. They will never fight again with the white men." She threw the shaft of the arrow after the burned carcass into the fire. "The Great Spirit speaks well in the thunder."

She was still peering into the fire, watching the dissolving remnant of the raven, when there was a sound of footsteps at the entrance of the cavern. She rose quickly from her knees and turned her small beady eyes upon the intruder.

"Back, back!" she screamed; "come not here! Back, back—or die!" She seized a bow and fitted a poisoned arrow to the cord.

"Stay thy hand, great Wauna," answered the dark figure in the mouth of the cavern. "It is thy servant, Sitting Bull. Peace be between us."

"Why come ye here at such an evil hour?" asked the witch, in quieter tones, throwing the bow and arrow back upon the floor. "Where are thy gifts and the offering?"

"The squaw brings from the valley two ponies laden with the gifts. I left her far behind, for I must return before the moon is full. I come to seek the will of the Great Spirit for my people, the Dakotas. I must lead them to the hunting-ground where the cow buffalo is plenty. The war chief has sought my counsel, and into my hands has he given the conduct of my people. Since last full moon. through river, and forest, and cañon, have I struggled to reach thee, and my body is sick and my bones are full of pains. Speak now with the Great Spirit, that he may watch over and guide my people. See, now! I have brought thee Tatonka, the white wolf, for an offering."

The medicine-man drew from the folds of his robe the whelp of a white wolf and placed it in her hands. His moccasins were torn until they scarcely covered his feet, and the water ran down his legs and stood in pools at his

heels. He panted wearily, as if overcome with exhaustion. The rents in his clothing showed that he had passed through the forest where there was no trail. Hunger and fatigue had weakened and emaciated his huge frame, yet his keen eye had lost none of its lustre. Anxiety and eagerness shone from his features.

"Thou hast done well," said the woman, attaching the frightened wolf to the thong from which she had released the raven. "Thy mission is indeed a modest one, but it shall be well with thee. Thou shalt thyself speak with the Great Spirit. The Wauna shall aid thee. Thou shalt become a great leader among thy people."

"Aid thy servant, great Wauna, that no evil may befall the tribes. If the mission be successful, then shall Sitting Bull become the war chief of all the Dakotas, and thou, Wauna, shall become great among all the people."

The woman fastened her snaky eyes upon him as if to divine his thoughts. "He who would be war chief must endure pain and affliction without shrinking backward," she said. "Show me the scars of the sun-dance."

"I have none. Because I am a medicine-man I have not sought fame on the war-trail."

"He who would lead his people in battle must prove himself worthy. Come—and flinch not."

The witch-maiden took two long plaits of sinew having hooks at each end and threw them over the horizontal pole that crossed the entrance. By means of a sliding noose she fastened them so that the four hooks hung down, near together.

"Come! Prepare thyself! He who aspires to lead his people on the war-trail must prove himself worthy."

He cast his robe on the floor of the cave and stood under the hooks. His features hardened and his muscles grew tense. The woman skilfully cut the skin of his back and breast—two vertical slits over each—and slipped the hooks under the ribbons of flesh that were released.

"Now, free thyself!" she commanded. "Tear thyself loose from the bondage of fear or thou art no better than a squaw. He who would lead his people must be brave."

The huge savage dropped his full weight upon the hooks and drew up his knees until they touched his chest. Then

he extended them downward and raised himself, dropping again and again. The lines of his face contracted and his muscles stood out like bands of iron. One by one the hooks tore loose until at length he fell exhausted at the feet of the Wauna. Not a sound had passed his lips to tell of the agony of the self-imposed torture.

"Well done, my son. Well art thou fit to lead thy people in battle. But thou desirest to become a great medicine-chief. Those who would heal their people must prove themselves worthy. Canst thou heal the bite of the snake enemy? Canst thou defy Natakis?"

She retreated into the recess of the cave, and returned bearing in one hand a huge rattlesnake and in the other several tufts of herbs bound together with thongs.

"Come, come," she said. "Give thy finger to Natakis. Then from these herbs choose the one which will heal thee."

The medicine-man took the herbs and drew forth a bunch having long leafless stems with a thorny button on the end. He placed one in his mouth and chewed it to a paste. Then extending his left forefinger he vexed the snake until it buried its fangs in the fleshy part. Instantly he placed the wound in his mouth and sucked the poison into the pulp of the herb. After a time he withdrew it and held it before the Wauna. There was no sign of the poison left, not even a swelling.

"Well done, my son," chuckled the hag. "Thou art both brave and skilful. Having proved thyself worthy, thou art permitted to talk with the Great Spirit."

She seized a cup made from the horn of a mountain sheep, filled it with a curious green liquid, and placed it in his hand.

"Now, drink," she said, "and lay thyself to sleep upon these skins. In thy dreams the Great Spirit will appear unto thee."

The great savage drained the cup and composed himself upon the heap of furs. His pale features, lit by the yellow firelight, assumed a hue that was haggard and ghastly beyond description. As he lay there almost naked, the impersonation of exhausted animal determination, his frame seemed reduced to bones and bands of sinew.

When the witch-maiden perceived that the draught had

produced unconsciousness, she quickly bound the feet of the wolf cub, and, throwing it upon the flat stone as she had done with the raven, proceeded to disembowel it and spread the entrails out for inspection. The unfortunate animal struggled vigorously, but she held it fast between her knees while the curving membranes twisted about upon the stone.

"Good, good!" she screamed. "The son of the white wolf is to become great. He shall lead his people into the great valley beyond the Yellowstone. He shall become a great chief."

She struck a blow upon the head of the cub and threw it into the fire. The fat caught and burned brightly. Leaping up, she pressed her forearms against her sides, the fingers pointing downward, and hopping upon one foot danced in a circle around the fire, chanting in a monotone,—

"Spirit of the Sun, appear! Speak with thy faithful servant."

This she repeated until the last trace of the wolf's cub had mingled with the embers of the fire. Then ceasing from the dance, she heaped up more fagots until the air became swelteringly hot. The storm without had spent its fury, and the rain was pattering fitfully upon the stones and fallen trees near the entrance. The medicine-man slept heavily. The hypnotic potion was not needed to quiet his weary limbs. The woman sat down cross-legged before the fire, waiting for his returning consciousness. The twin pine-knots had long burned away, and the firelight threw her shadow athwart the entrance. Long she sat thus, until the morning broke over a storm-washed expanse of dripping foliage and swollen streams. At last the medicine-man awoke and sat upright.

"What hast thou dreamed?" asked the witch-maiden, eagerly.

"Oh, Wauna, prophetess of the storms," he answered, "worthy art thou of thine office! In my dream I saw wonderful things. I saw the horsemen of the white men rushing among the lodges of my people. They were many, and my people were frightened and would have fled, but I bore among them the skin of the white wolf and commanded them to turn and fight. Their hearts were strength-

ened at the sight. They charged upon the white men, and drove them back, and slew them to a man."

"The omen is good, my son. Now art thou rewarded for toiling through the forests, and across the streams, and up the mountain-side to seek the aid of the Wauna. Return now to thy people, and lead them to victory and the hunting-ground. Thou shalt drive back the white men and lead the Dakotas into the great valley beyond the Yellowstone."

She darted back into the recesses of the cave, and returned with a gaunt bald eagle bound and hooded with a piece of buckskin. "Take with thee the war eagle," she said. "Under its wings shalt thou find victory for thy people. Go, and let not the waters hinder thy flight. The full moon is near at hand."

He seized the bird by the talons, and, throwing his robe around him, sped out of the cave and disappeared from sight among the firs that covered the mountain-side. The sorceress peered after him, shading her eyes from the brightness of the morning sun.

"He must hasten or be too late. The moon is growing,—it shows in the east when the sun is high. Leader of men, may the deer run slowly compared with thee."

In the valley of the Greasy Grass a thousand cone-shaped lodges lifted their tattered shapes out of the flowering border of willow and wild rose that marked its winding course. Twenty herds of ponies browsed and chased one another on the slope that ascended towards the foot-hills of the Big Horn range, wandering impulsively this way and that under the watchful eyes of their naked guardians. Groups of dirty, ragged children were tumbling about in the shade of the bushes or mischievously running and hiding to escape capture by their anxious squaw mothers. Many of the braves were pensively smoking in the shade of the lodges. Others, more industrious, were sharpening spear- and arrow-heads or mending their bows and quivers. The camp could not have presented a more lazy or improvident appearance had it remained scattered still among the winter sites in the fastnesses of the mountains. The scarcely perceptible breeze that moved the leaves of the bushes was ineffectual

against the enervating warmth of the June sun. Six thousand savages, ignorant of the reason for the mighty assemblage, were indifferently awaiting the command of the great war chief to move, they knew not whither.

Such was the camp of the Dakotas when a lone horseman appeared galloping over the crest of the low hills that descended from the Rosebud divide in the east. One by one the curious eyes of the camp were turned upon him, watching him as he dashed rapidly down the slope and swam the stream. He galloped furiously, shouting inquiries to those he passed on his way, until he reached the lodge of Gall, the war chief, where he stopped and quickly entered. Almost immediately they saw him leap again upon his tired pony and continue his frantic career down the stream among the lodges of the lower villages.

"To arms! To arms! The white soldiers! Arm for your lives!" he cried as he swept on.

Instantly the signals were given to the herders. The bands of ponies began to circle and close in upon their leaders,—a moment later they were galloping madly each in the direction of its respective village.

The attack by the white soldiers was a complete surprise. Until the cry of the messenger rung out over the lazy camp not a living soul in all the mighty assembly had dreamed of the dread presence. So rapidly had they moved to the attack that even the messenger had not succeeded in distancing them by more than an hour's ride. The braves had barely time to swing their quivers and array themselves for the fight, when a cloud of dust, rising behind a curve in the banks of the stream, announced the near approach of the enemy. At the sight the war-cry rose, and was caught up from village to village until the air was filled with an agony of demoniacal yells. Activity and confusion prevailed where only a moment before all had been dreamy quietness. It was like the change wrought by an earthquake.

A cavalry column defiled out of a break in the north border of hills that flanked the Greasy Grass, and plunging into the stream, crossed rapidly, scarcely breaking the trot. Soon they swung into line of battle athwart the valley, up-stream from the Indian village, in plain view of all, the

guidons fluttering, and the sabres and bright metal trappings flashing in the sunlight. The braves, each mounted on his fleetest pony, armed with rifle, or lance, or bow and arrow, as chance provided, awaited the charge in the edge of the willows that skirted the village. Straight upon them came the battalion of horse, a long unbroken line swinging steadily towards them. It was time to meet the charge.

The chiefs lead out, and wheeling swiftly parallel to the line, discharged their weapons. The warriors followed, and the sally produced its effect. The line of cavalry halted,—the soldiers dismounted and opened fire with their carbines. A storm of arrows was the reply. The commander's heart failed him. The line mounted and fell back, halted once more, and opened fire. The bullets of the whites were deadly. Already many braves had fallen, and were being borne to the rear by their comrades. This time the whites held their ground; it seemed impossible to turn them. In the camp was a wild chaos of confusion. The aged men with the squaws and papooses were flying to the hills, driving the spare ponies before them. The sharp reports of rifle, screams, and yells, the neighing of horses, and, more piercing than all, the shrill war-cry, rose out of the circling, struggling mass in the valley.

Gall, the war chief, looked down from an eminence upon the waning fortunes of his braves. They could see him sitting there like a statue on his long-tailed white pony. On his left a frightened rout of women and children was crowding up into the bluffs; in front, the smoke and dust of the battle; on the right, in the distance, a rising cloud of dust gave warning of the approach of another column of the white enemy. It seemed as if the hour had come for him to dash down and lead his yielding people, but still he sat, silent and grim, scrutinizing the strife below, his war-bonnet trailing to the ground, his rifle resting across the pony's withers.

He alone saw the single horseman that emerged from the opening in the hills and dashed down the slope towards the scene of the struggle. It was the medicine-man of the Uncapapas, Sitting Bull, horned like a demon with the buffalo skull which proclaimed his intercourse with spirits. The white wolf-skin flowed from his shoulder, shining out against

the black robe that covered his huge frame like an ermine shield. High above his head he bore the pinioned war eagle, the talisman of victory. Into the thick of the fight, among the astonished braves, he plunged.

"Death to the Mineaska! Kill! Kill!" he cried.

The effect was like magic. The war-cry rose again from a thousand savage throats, and the braves bore down upon the cavalry like vultures upon the dead. There was no resisting the fury of the charge. The remaining horsemen turned and fled across the stream, leaving a wake of killed and wounded. Upon each fallen body leaped a dozen warriors to strip it of clothing and scalp. The cry of victory rose like a wail from Gehenna. From every drop of blood spilt on that field has sprung a thousand pages of history.

Down the valley, among the lower villages, rushed the medicine-chief, bearing aloft the living eagle. The war-cry followed the passage of the mighty emblem, and echoed again from village to village. The old men and women, frenzied at the change of fortune, turned back from the hills to join their braves and unite in the plunder and torture. Never was defeat of the whites more unexpected and depressing,—never victory of the Dakotas more complete and thrilling.

The sun was reddening in the west when Gall, the war chief, turned his white pony up the trail that leads to the highest bluff that overlooks the scene of the battle. At the summit he saw the tall figure of the medicine-man calmly surveying the terrible rejoicings in the valley. He still bore the emblems which had spurred the warriors to success. His attitude was that of the workman who surveys a well-finished task.

Gall dismounted at his side, and removing his war-bonnet, placed it, together with the trail-rope of the white pony, in the hands of the medicine-chief.

"Sitting Bull," he said, haughtily, "this day thou hast led thy people to a great victory. Henceforth thou shalt lead them in peace as well as in war. Henceforth thou shalt be known as chief of all the Dakotas. Let this spot receive its name from thee. Release the war eagle, that it may tell the sun that a chief has arisen who meets the white man

and leaves his bones to whiten upon the prairie. Surely the Great Spirit speaks in thee."

"Thou hast spoken well, war chief," answered Sitting Bull. "It is the day of the full moon. This night shall I command the tribes to move forth into the great valley beyond the Yellowstone. The Great Spirit has spoken."

From that day until his death Sitting Bull guided the destinies of the Sioux. A recluse medicine-squaw who dwelt in a remote cavern of the Big Horn range near Cloud's Peak suggested to him the idea of leadership, by interpreting a dream for him. His own cunning and address accomplished the rest. The story of his visit to the sorceress was related to me by one of his own relatives.

CONYNGHAM FOXE AND THE CHARITY BALL.

AT the hour of nine, in the Hotel Bellevue, fronting Broad Street and a frozen city, Conyngham Foxe was weighing with much bitterness the advisability of casting loose fore and aft from the social shore and steering out alone into regions unknown and beyond hope of succor.

He should have been elsewhere. It was the night of the Charity Ball, and in some way, through the machinations of his brother's wife, Mrs. Montmorency Foxe, and his former guardian's wife, Mrs. Penn Gaskill Williamson, he had been selected, assigned, and warned to appear as escort to Miss Rittenhouse, the heiress expectant of two millions, and her mother.

If he had been called upon to direct his own hanging and spring the drop himself, there might have been something in the prospect worth laughing at. But to receive notice of this high-handed act of ownership and superiority over him from two respectable ladies who must have observed long ago how utterly he denied their prerogatives, was an ill too grievous for human flesh to bear.

They had written, the two of them, no doubt,—one providing chirography, the other composition and rhetoric,—

"DEAREST CONYNGHAM,—It is all arranged. We will leave our house at ten-thirty sharp,—West Logan Square. You are to take Miss Rittenhouse, and of course her mother. Look your sweetest, Cony dear, and come early.

"Your loving sister,

"LUCRETIA."

"Look your sweetest,"—to a man. Could anything exceed such drivelling inanity!

It was time to oppose this tyranny. The end must come some time. Why not now? Yet even a shipwrecked sailor in mid-ocean, from clinging to his spar a few hours, acquires an affection for it not to be overcome without exertion. Before cutting the knot and sinking he is bound

to do a little desperate thinking. Conyngham had been taught to dread social ostracism with the same degree of horror that a voyager entertains for the sea-bottom. Yet for some time past he had been much in doubt as to the soundness of such teaching. There are some things more dreadful to suffer than others: slow torture than death by drowning, and social ostracism than social slavery, perhaps.

Conyngham Foxe was the last male of a long line of descent, which, tracing backward by way of William Penn, touched Adam. His elder brother, Montmorency, having married early, was gliding into life's shadow without a child. His sister also, being left a widow, had no wayward sons to regret. Therefore, unless Conyngham married and perpetuated the line, it died forever.

The event of his twenty-first birthday had bestowed upon him a country house surrounded by ample lands and a well-filled barn; also two hundred thousand in securities returning a liberal interest. But the preservation of the family honor, although a most laudable consideration, was not, in Conyngham's estimation, comparable in any degree to the joy of squandering a competency.

"If the family name is to be buried," he used to say, "we'll hold a king's wake over the corpse."

The wildness of his ways had induced his sober Quaker friends to solemnly believe that he was on the broad road to perdition. They passed him by, pointing over their shoulders with a significant shrug. His friends, however, who knew the man at heart, stuck to him with a grim disregard of sinister aspersions; for, having been once admitted to the inner sanctuary of his intimacy, they found they could not do less than die for him.

In the clubs no one doubted his standing. He had been admitted promptly on becoming of age to the Philadelphia, the Racquette, the Rabbit, and the Ayrmont Gun Club, together with several others of lesser mention. His most grievous breach of rules had been to enter the Philadelphia about nine one morning in evening dress; but the note of the secretary, brought to him just as he was indulging an eye-opener, brought forth repentance, apologies, and a more faithful adherence to the proprieties of life.

As a sporting man his success had been something to

stand aside and wonder at. He aided and abetted, held stakes, timed, and refereed in all local set-tos where skill and prowess gave tone to the affair ; he was unexcelled as a wing shot ; had been barred from the club pool tournaments on account of his certainty in prize-winning ; was a Delphic oracle at the Derby ; and had even been seen coming away too near dawn from certain quiet sanctuaries of the green cloth, unknown to Mayor Stuart and his minions.

Socially, however, Conyngham was slipping his anchors. Where angels trod with deference he had jumped without a thought,—on the toes of the local society goddesses. They were hurt. They pouted, and vowed that by the bones of immortal Penn they would wipe his name forever from their lists ; but some way he repented not and gave no promise of reform. Then a few ventured to suggest that, for something they felt was in him, they ought to bear with him awhile, and endeavor to rescue him from the oblivion into which they felt this headlong downward career must surely plunge him.

He had been a member of the City Troop, that venerable organization of local patriarchs militant, until his repeated failures to attend drill had exasperated the ruling powers of that punctilious body to the verge of madness, and they requested him to resign. He did so, and buried his hopes of promotion in the cavalry ; but the military spirit within him was in no wise quenched. Another year found him installed as captain and inspector of rifle practice in a city regiment of the guard.

Out of the depths of which sinecure office a diplomatic brigadier-general had reached downward and drawn him up, so to speak, to the right hand of the throne, remarking as he did so,—

"Foxe is wild and worthless, but rich and elegant. He'll make a first-rate aide."

But they were astounded on the staff not more by his nonchalance and lack of punctuality than by the excellent form of his uniforms and his knowledge of the minutiæ of tactics.

"Learned it at Chester,—and can't very well forget it," he explained.

And so on this night of the Charity Ball he was coolly contemplating cutting the entire engagement and pulling down upon his head a towering Washington monument of consequences. He sat before the grate, his hands thrust deep in his trousers-pockets and chin buried in bosom, watching the red light flickering on the polished tips of his shoes.

His student friend, Pilkington Sykes, home from Columbia for the Christmas vacation, was remonstrating boldly.

"Brace up, Foxey! You can't cut a Charity Ball, your nearest relatives, and two society queens without playing havoc generally. You can't back out now,—it's too late. I sent word for you myself that you would surely be on hand at ten-thirty. You make me out a fool or a liar if you don't go."

"Can't help it, sonny. I've cut plenty before this. What did they want to run me into it for? They knew I didn't want to go; they know I hate such things. I'd give a farm in Jersey if they'd kindly forget that I'm alive. Push the button!"

"But think of it, man! If you don't go they'll believe you're crazy, or, what's worse, an ass, or a cad. It's fearful, man! fearful to contemplate! What will Mrs. Rittenhouse think—and Mrs. Penn Gaskill Williamson—and Mrs. Pinckney Drexel! They'll all cut you dead. They'll ask who the gentleman is when your name is mentioned. I know how it will be. It's fearful, man!"

"Sonny, be quiet! You're young and inexperienced. If those people had any notion of cutting me, they've had oceans of chances to do it already. I want them to cut me,—I want them to stop sending me invitations,—and they know it. There's a stack now in my club box three months old. Some day I'll have Patrick open them and make out a list of the people who ought never to speak to me. I know of three from the general in the lot,—he told me of them himself.—Come in, boy! What'll you have, sonny? Two Jamaica rum punches. And fly! Don't wait for the elevator! Three steps at a jump down and back, or never enter this room again!"

"But you're not going to drink anything, man, before you go to the ball? You're crazy!"

"I tell you I'm not going to the ball. Balls are well

enough for youngsters and society aspirants and swells, but I've had enough of them. Why, sonny, I'll be thirty-two in a week."

The defiant Foxe struggled to his feet and looked out of the window.

"Beastly night. I wouldn't wear an evening suit for a thousand dollars,—catch cold and die.—Come in! Boy, tell them to spread that on my private ledger,—and here's a wheel for you."

The college weakling was bracing his back against the door, barring the path of the bewildered Buttons.

"Foxey, I can't stand it! For my sake—for old time's sake—get into your clothes and go. Get there some way, and then if you must,—faint—have an apoplectic fit in the widow's arms—and get sent to the hospital. You must go!"

"Sonny, you're worse than the plague!—Boy, tell Saunders to send up the likeliest kid in the house,—no, tell him to come himself! Run! skip! fly!"

The youth on vacation fell on his neck and made arrangements for an embrace, which was frustrated by a dexterous back-trip that sent him rolling on the floor.

"None of your tricks, sonny! I'll go if it will make you feel *very* much better, but you needn't go wild over it. Drink that mixture. It will make your hair curl."

The head steward's tap was answered by a gruff "Come in!" and that pandering worthy's eye fell upon two punch-glasses projected against two upturned heads.

"Oh—ah—er—Mr. Foxe, did you send for me, sir? What will you have, sir? If it's a carriage, I fear you're most too late, sir. They're all at the ball by this time, sir."

"Saunders, you idiot! Gather your wits! I want you to do something, and do it yourself, and do it quick. Here's a twenty. Now, call a four-wheeler—get in yourself—drive to the Paris laundry for my clothes—break into Reed's and get me a tie—fetch my evening suit from the tailors'—you know, what-you-call-'em, on Chestnut Street, where all my work's done—get that new cape coat, too. Stop at Paddle's and get a pair of evening gaiters—and a pair of lavender gloves any place! Run! Don't lose a minute! Be back here by nine-thirty sharp!"

"But, sir—Lord, sir—I can't leave, sir. I'm needed 'ere, sir—and, it's very late."

"No 'but's'! Get out! Make your explanations when you come back. Do you take me for a Chicago pork merchant? Go! skip! and hold the carriage when you come back. You'll make what you can save out of that bill."

That would be a good deal, the excellent Saunders thought. He heard the last word going through the door like a shot.

"Great guns! Foxey! The man can't attend to all that in a week. Be reasonable at any rate."

"Shut up, sonny. I said I'd go to that ball to please you. Now let me go in my own way, for heaven's sake. There's oceans of time for getting ready for a ball."

The boy was looking out upon the street. The horses of the green car, struggling through the drifts at the intersection of Broad and Walnut, cast swirling clouds upon the pedestrians laboring by, with their heads pulled down into their coat-collars like misanthropic turtles.

"Foxey," he said, meditatively, "if you were to miss that ball to-night the town would be too hot to hold you. Broad Street in August will be chilly compared to it."

"There's Bermuda, sonny. Boat leaves to-morrow, and I've a standing invitation from the Grenadier Guards to come down any time. My health seems to need a change of air, too. But I'm going to the ball, I said. Keep your nerve steady."

"So is the William Penn statue going to the top of the City Hall tower."

A bell-boy tapped and entered.

"Barbers all went home at nine, sir. Very sorry. Maybe I can borrow Mr. Lane's razor for you."

"Bring a razor or a barber in two minutes or I'll have you discharged. Wait! two whiskeys and a siphon,—ice in the glasses! Run! fly!"

The youth from Columbia nursed his leg and gazed disapprovingly upon the unreasonable Conyngham from the edge of the sofa. Then he went softly to the bath-room and turned on the warm water. At that moment the bell-boy returned with a much-used razor.

"Where did you get that antiquity?" inquired the donee.

"All I could get, sir. Mr. Lane inquired particularly if it was for you."

"You brazen dissembler! Why didn't you bring a bread-knife?"

It was one of those trials to which one must submit with fortitude. A visit to an outside barber was urgently necessary, and a boy was despatched to reconnoitre. He returned reporting an ancient colored man still on post at Fifteenth and Sansom, and was promptly despatched back to occupy and develop that enemy's attention until Conyngham arrived. It was better economy to dress first and be shaved afterwards.

At ten o'clock Saunders returned red in the face and very much out of breath, convoyed by a squadron of bell-boys with bundles. One seized the shirt and inserted the studs. Another laid out and smoothed the dress suit. Still another aided Conyngham in disrobing. At ten-fifteen he was all that his tailor could wish to look upon before dying,—with the single exception of tonsorial finish,—and he descended in the elevator and embarked for the barber's. There was some delay. The driver, having learned that he was serving Mr. Conyngham Foxe, had crawled into his vehicle and was already asleep on the seats.

The colored barber, complaining of rheumatism and family cares, was delighted to have the "honah of sarvin' sech swell gemmen;" but he was careful to state that his shop at that time was running on a cash basis, paying and receiving pay as it went. No doubt he had observed a tendency among gentlemen in dress suits to forget their pocket-books and their small change. Only stress of weather had delayed him in his shop beyond the hour of nine. He had not shaved "sech ag'eeable gemmen sence he las' shave Gineral Grant," he explained, however, as he clutched a dollar for his pains.

On returning to the carriage at ten-forty there was another delay and a parley concerning the next halting-place.

"You ought to go right away, man. I'll get out at the Bellevue, and you drive right on like you were going to a fire. You'll keep them twenty minutes at least as it is."

"Plenty of time, sonny. They're in no special hurry.

We'll just drive to the club and see if Parkinson's there. He'll want to see me after the ball, and we might as well make a date now.—Driver! Thirteenth and Walnut." The carriage-wheels creaked through the frozen snow, and the horses' hoofs stirred up clouds that took away the breath of the pedestrians.

Entering the club, the head porter touched Conyngham on the arm.

"Mr. Foxe," he said, excitedly, "there's a man been lookin' for ye with a message. I sent him to the Saginaw. He says it's very important, sir, and he's to come back here if he don't find you."

"Be up in the reading-room.—Ah, Parkinson, just the fellow I want to see.—Sonny, it's too late to go to that beastly ball now. I'd rather not go than be late. You get in the carriage and drive to West Logan Square yourself. Tell them that very important business has detained me. A detective from London—case that demands the utmost secrecy—must return to New York to take steamer by midnight train. Make it sound well. Hurry back and meet me here." And the socially condemned took passage by elevator for the library.

Pilkington Sykes clambered back into the carriage grumbling lamentations unfit for historical preservation. He felt sure it was the last time he would ever stand by Foxey in a social peril. He could stay with him through any other crisis, but never again where appointments as escort had anything to do with the matter. He was bearing Conyngham Foxe's social head to the basket, and would probably be chief mourner at the funeral. A blooming termination to a holiday vacation.

Foxe was boring himself with the newest number of *Life* when the messenger returned with the note. By the time he had read it through to the signature the Charity Ball and all things thereunto pertaining were obliterated memories. It was from General Porter, and read,—

"Telegram from the governor orders the command under arms at once for the coke regions to suppress riot among strikers. Am confined to bed by temporary illness, and since assistant adjutant-general is out of town, I desire you to assemble the staff and issue all necessary orders in my name. Everything depends upon your promptness and

judgment. The brigade should depart by early trains in the morning. I send to you as you are usually unoccupied. Report receipt by this messenger.

"PORTER,
"*Brigadier-General, Commanding.*"

Here was something truly worth an effort. He seized a pen and wrote,—

"Everything will proceed as you direct. Brigade will leave Broad Street Station at eight to-morrow morning. Special car on last section for the staff.

"FOXE,
"*A.D.C.*"

"What's the use being on the staff if you can't ride in a special car?" he thought. "Here, boy; take that and run. You may save a life if you hurry."

Eleven P.M., half the officers at the Charity Ball, the rest asleep, and a brigade of twenty-five hundred men to be turned out before seven o'clock in the morning!

"Thomas, ring up a cab!" he called, sharply, and turned again to the writing-desk.

"For staff-officers, regimental commanders, and field officers, this," he muttered.

"Your regiment will be formed under arms at the armory by seven o'clock A.M. to-morrow, the 10th inst., with full field equipment and rations for three days in haversacks. From the armory you will march to the Broad Street Station, forming on arrival there as directed by the staff-officer in waiting. By eight o'clock you will be embarked and *en route* for active service in a region to be announced later. Report receipt at once to head-quarters, City Hall. By command of Brigadier-General Porter.

"CONYNGHAM FOXE,
"*A.D.C. and A.A.A.G.*"

"No, cab, sir; sorry, sir; every wan out," interrupted the porter.

"I'll have to walk, then. Bring my overshoes and that fur-lined coat hanging in my closet. Hurry!"

Five minutes later he entered the office of the Western Union Telegraph Company at Broad and Chestnut.

"How many messengers have you ready to go out?"

"Ten, sir."

"Let all of them go with me; also an operator who is a typewriter copyist."

"Right away, sir?"

"Right away. Tell them to come with me. They may not be back before morning, but they will be well paid. That's my address."

"Certainly, sir," said the clerk, glancing at the well-known name.

Messengers' fees were not usually paid in bills, and ten dollars would not go far, either. The only place where coin could be had at such an hour were the restaurants and bars. He crossed to Steele's,—they knew him there.

"Can you let me have a hundred dollars in silver?" he asked of the bartender, who was grinning broadly at the procession of messengers filing through the door. He thought it was one of Mr. Foxe's queer freaks.

"Certainly, Mr. Foxe. Going to treat that crowd?"

"Not right away,—not before they earn it," he said, filling his pockets with coin.

The snow was whirling under the dark archways as he led the little squad struggling through the drifts to the unfinished western gallery of the City Hall. The floors were not laid, no lights were burning, and no watchman stood guard over that part of the building. It was very dark, very quiet, and very cold there. He opened the storm-door of the head-quarters office with a latch-key. It was one of those locks that work with either key or combination, whichever one you choose to be troubled with. He lit the gas, and showed the operater a typewriter and a telegraph relay.

"I had that wire cut in here some time ago," he explained. "Thought it might come handy some time or other. I want you to make fifteen copies of that order as fast as ever you can." He laid before him the order he had written at the club.

Then turning to the sleepy messengers, he said,—

"Wake up, boys! I want you to make records for yourselves to-night. I have an important message for each one of you to deliver. You are to hunt for your man and keep on hunting till you find him. Then you are to bring his answer back here. I'll wait for you, and every

boy that kicks a goal will get five dollars down for his valuable exertions." He rattled his pockets significantly. The boys were wide awake enough now. Five dollars was an independent fortune to every one of them.

He took the copies from the typewriter and addressed each in bold characters, writing "Report receipt by this messenger" plainly on the face of each. In ten minutes the boys were fighting the storm, hunting up regimental commanders and staff-officers.

"If they don't find them at home," he thought, "they'll catch them on their way back from the ball."

There were other messages to send before the machinery of the brigade could be set in motion. The telegraph-operator would have his hands full.

"Get your central office and hold it," he said. Then wrote,—

"You will report with all men of your company under arms, with full field equipment and three days' rations, at the armory before seven o'clock to-morrow morning, the 10th inst., preparatory for leaving the city for duty under orders of the governor. By command of Brigadier-General Porter.

"CONYNGHAM FOXE,
"*A.D.C. and A.A.A.G.*"

This was for the non-commissioned officers, whose addresses were carefully kept by roster.

"Repeat this message to every name on that list," he said. "It will probably keep you busy awhile."

The operator knew his business. He sent the message, then the list, and let the central office do the work. He had been a messenger before he learned the sound code.

The trains had to be gotten out. He made a list of the Pennsylvania officials from the president down to the yard-master, and penned an inverted round robin for them.

"Brigade ordered to coke regions, to quell rioters. In case you have not been notified by quartermaster-general, we need four trains, fifteen cars each, ready to leave Broad Street with troops at eight to-morrow morning; one Pullman in every five coaches. Will direct embarkation in person.

"PORTER,
"*Brigadier-General, Commanding.*"

The coke interests and the railroad interests were not widely separated. The brigade would leave Broad Street that morning if nothing else did. There was no doubt that the trains would be ready. Certain expressions of official good-will had been received at head-quarters before.

The room was cold and cheerless, no fire, only one jet of gas. There was no furniture but the tables and the tier of closets ranged around the sides of the room, where the staff-officers kept their uniforms and swords. No sound broke the stillness but the sharp clicking of the telegraph relay. Conyngham put his feet on the table and settled back into a chair. He must wait for those boys. It would never do for the frozen little waifs to be disappointed when they returned, and the operator would surely leave as soon as his last message was sent. But there was really plenty of time before he would have to be at the railway station to direct the embarkation. His uniform was at the club, and the liquid rations for the trip had to be ordered, but it was only a little after midnight. He hoped everything would run smoothly. He hoped it would, but there were misgivings; the brigade had never been hurried like this before.

The clicking of the instrument was soporific. He heard a deep-toned clock-bell strike one, and fell dozing.

The next fact that forced itself upon his consciousness was that some huge hand was shaking him roughly by the shoulder.

"Wake up, will you?" growled a surly voice.

He struggled to his feet. A heavy, stoop-shouldered man, with dark, sunken eyes and a full beard, was glaring at him from beneath the rim of a grimy silk hat of ancient pattern. He looked like a heavy villain running loose from some neighboring theatre.

"What are you sendin' out those orders in Gineral Porter's name for? I know you, Major Foxe. You sent me to jail for runnin' off with your horse last camp, an' had me dismissed in disgrace from the regiment, all along of a little fun. You're tryin' to git the troops down a-fightin' with honest laborin' men that wants fair pay for an honest day's work. Yer a slik, palaverin', lazy aristocrat,—too lazy to do anything yerself, an' too stingy to want an honest

laborin' man paid full wages. But it's man to man here. You an' I are equal in this deal. You sit down there and countermand those orders or it's all day with you. I'm the man that can make you do it, an' you might as well settle down quietly to business."

There was no dream about this. The man was the same he had ordered into arrest at the camp,—and he was giving him orders. His tone, his manner, his words, were the refined quintessence of impudence. As the fellow talked he collected his scattered senses.

"What have you to do with any orders I give?" he asked, waving the intruder back with his hand. "You are drunk; possibly crazy. At any rate, you are laboring under a tremendous delusion if you think you can enter this office and carry on to suit yourself. There's a door behind you, and it opens from the inside. You get the other side of it in three seconds or I'll put you there!"

"Not so fast, my young buck!" the man answered, edging back a little. "I'm a member of the Amalgamated Coke Association, an' I've got plenty of backin' in whatever I undertake. You might jest as well do what I tell you without any fuss, an' save doctor's bills—possibly funeral expenses, an' mournin' for yer wife. I'm here to stop this shipment of soldiers, an' it's got to stop."

"What in the blooming, howling, jumping blazes do you take me for!" cried Conyngham, throwing his overcoat on the table. "Face about and get through that door before I count three or I'll turn your corpse over to the police!"

The man didn't seem to electrify worth a Chinese cent piece. He was preparing for fight, not flight. There wasn't a weapon in the building more deadly than a staff sword, and that wouldn't kill a consumptive mosquito. He would be forced to descend to vulgar fists. The prospect was acquiring considerable gloom, but Conyngham took up a sparring attitude and watched his opportunity. The man backed away and waited.

But he did not wait long. The man made a lunge to strike him, but instead cushioned the blow of a tolerably hard fist somewhere between the eyes. He appeared used to that sort of massage. He only backed away and made

another lunge. This time his foot caught something and he fell over against the table.

After this brief skirmish of the outposts the reserves were drawn into the engagement. The representative of the Amalgamated Coke Association drew reinforcements from cover in the rear, and dealt so heavy a blow on the head of his dandified opponent that the latter dropped like a bale of hay, and spread his shining shirt front and delicately adjusted tie all over a very dirty carpet. There are times when a loaded billy is a most trusty weapon.

This part of the work was done as well as his most influential constituent could have wished. The orders were not exactly countermanded, but the fur-lined overcoat would make up for that. And there was coin in the pockets! He started to leave his own ragged ulster, but profiting by a wiser second thought, returned and took it with him. The face on the floor was very pale. The billy had cut the scalp, and blood was oozing from the wound. The representative thought he might have killed him, but there was no time for investigations. The interests of number one required immediate attention, and there was an early train for the coke regions. It left in ten minutes.

In the house on West Logan Square Mrs. Montmorency Foxe sat tapping the tiling with the toe of her slipper, veiled, gloved, and bundled to the ears. Mrs. Rittenhouse, from a seat on the opposite side of the grate, was turning into her daughter's eyes one long earnest gleam of unutterable disgust.

"Why doesn't the man come? What on earth can be the matter? It is already almost eleven! He might at least have sent a note. I knew he was careless, but I never believed him utterly lacking in every evidence of good breeding!" stormed the elder Rittenhouse.

"Some time, mother, during a lucid interval, he may apologize," suggested the daughter. "The disease is not incurable."

"There are no doubt excellent reasons for his tardy appearance, Miss Rittenhouse," retorted Mrs. Foxe, taking exception to the final aspersion.

"Most excellent, no doubt," nodded the mother. "A

brief note delivered by a messenger would have prevented our sitting here for an hour wrapped to the tips of our ears."

Ting-a-ling-a-ling! away back in the passage.

A servant entered bearing a card.

"Now, ladies, do try and look severe," suggested Mrs. Foxe, beaming with triumphant sarcasm, and gathering up her skirts. "Wither him with a glance the moment he enters!"

But the card read, "Mr. Pilkington Sykes, Columbia College."

"Of all others! Show him in."

"Ah—er—ladies, good-evening! Mrs. Foxe!—I regret to be the bearer of bad news—but Mr. Foxe was on the point of starting here when he was called upon by a gentleman on very urgent business—very important business—gentleman from London, to return by steamer to-morrow morning—and he begged me present his most humble and sincere apologies."

"Indeed! By you. Why not by a messenger? You left him at the club, no doubt.—Mrs. Rittenhouse, Mr. Sykes."

"A-h-h! Some friend of Mr. Foxe." Through the lorgnettes,—"Most honored to meet you, sir. Tell Mr. Foxe, when you return to the club, that we had not thought of going to the ball after hearing that he had been selected as our escort. He has not inconvenienced us in the least. There is nothing to warrant his apology.—Mrs. Foxe, if you will excuse us, my daughter and I will retire to our rooms." With a sweeping bow the twain glided majestically down the length of the drawing-room and disappeared through the drapery.

"Oh, Mr. Sykes! How could he have disappointed us so!" moaned Mrs. Foxe. She was ready to weep.

So was Sykes. He felt that further delay on his part might not prove agreeable, so he bowed himself backward through the door, and rolled back to the club.

"That's the way they treat a fellow who is not used to lying," he muttered to himself. "A flat prospect now,—flat as the house-tops from the Art Club roof-garden."

The porter told him that Mr. Foxe had left the club on

business and would be back soon. "He said you was to wait here, sir." So he waited.

Twelve o'clock,—playing billiards. One o'clock,—just going down for a cup of coffee and a liqueur. Two o'clock! What on earth was the matter with Foxe! He called a carriage.

The porter did not know where Mr. Foxe had gone. Inquiry by telephone to the Bellevue returned in the negative. Mr. Foxe had gone out without a carriage. It must be staff business. When he played major he would go anywhere under any conditions. It was the only thing that shook him out of his lazy habits.

"City Hall—west entrance!" he called to the driver. "I'll make sure about head-quarters before I go any place else."

Hurrying through the dark hall-way he almost fell over two messenger-boys. They had been trying to open the outer door.

"Mister, they's a bloke in there some place 'as promised us a fiver apiece if we'd take a letter an' bring him an answer. An' now we's run all over the city and most froze ourselves doin' it, he's got us locked out." The little fellows were shivering and their voices trembled weakly.

He must have been there and gone. The door was caught by a spring combination lock, and Sykes knew the combination. He used to loaf in there mornings to read the papers. He lit a match, turned the knob to the proper point and opened the door, the boys at his heels.

A man in an evening suit was lying opposite the door face downward looking very white and death-like about the ears, and blood was flowing from a cut in a forehead that belonged to no other than Conyngham Foxe. Sykes suspended breathing operations a few moments, but had sense enough left to whisper to the messengers,—

"Here! You youngsters grab a leg apiece and we'll put him in the carriage. There's nothing to be done here. If he's not dead, he's almost frozen. Easy, now!"

Conyngham made the journey to the carriage and back to the Bellevue much as any dead man would have made it. Ready hands enough were there to bear him to his room and stand horrified around the bed. But he was not rigid

enough for a dead man. Sykes demanded restoratives and a physician. The shiny shirt bosom was hopelessly stained, and for a man on the point of attending a Charity Ball Foxey presented a most miserable appearance.

The rubbing and brandy soon had the desired effect. He opened his eyes and began to look hostile. His intellects had resumed operations on a thinking basis.

"Where's the honorable representative of the Amalgamated Coke Association?" he asked. "That's what a fellow gets for saving a rascal from the penitentiary. I ought to have let him go up last summer when he ran off with my horse. Now he comes back and slugs me. Oh, sonny, did you pay those boys? I've got to be at Broad Street Station at seven o'clock to see about those trains. Let's have a little terrapin and Duff Gordon and call it late dinner. You oughtn't let that ex-veteran get away. A little solitary meditation will do him good. Fellows! we ought to go down now and get a small lunch."

But the doctor vetoed the proposition, and motioned the reviving attendants to go out. Then the doctor and the Columbia infant removed his party dress and arrayed him in garments better suited to a fortnight in bed, and the Columbia infant resolutely mounted guard over him. Foxey began to feel tired and weak, and thought he would go to sleep. The doctor went out, forbidding visitors and prescribing quiet and hospital diet. Afterwards Foxey was glad he did.

Every one has followed the movements of the brigade from the time it assembled at Broad Street Station, all through the coke regions, to the hour of its return. Every one knows how the governor's telegraphic order for troops was sent from Harrisburg at ten o'clock one night, and before the same hour of the next his entire division was encamped in the coke regions. It was the most phenomenal mobilization in the history of the guard. Familiar as a fairy-tale—to every one who reads the newspapers.

And the Philadelphia Brigade, although farthest from the scene of the riot, was first to arrive on the ground.

Conyngham Foxe was absent from the assembly of the staff at the railroad station, and the special car was obliged

to roll away without him. Every man of them had said Foxey would never make a soldier, and this was a clincher; now they knew of a certainty whereof they spoke. The general being a taciturn man, and not given to talking except on official business, was rarely approached on moot social points, and had given no opinion concerning the cause of Foxe's defection. This the able members present for duty understood as a sign that he was properly ashamed of having been persuaded for social reasons to appoint an aide-de-camp so completely unfitted for the duties of an officer. Major Foxe's resignation would certainly be forthcoming, and they disputed among themselves concerning his probable successor.

The brigade had put down the insurrection and had returned before Conyngham left his bed in No. 14 of the Hotel Bellevue. Sykes's report of the conference at West Logan Square had decided him to pass the period of his convalescence at the island of Bermuda. The hotel was as good a place as any to start from; there was no use in being sent home. Pilkington Sykes decided to cut the spring semester as far as the Easter vacation and go also. He had been present at the execution, had assisted in the funeral services; it would never do to desert the body at the entrance to the cemetery.

They were at the wharf of the steamer watching the last of the baggage ascend the plank. The great whistle had already sounded, warning visitors to quit the decks, and it was time to go aboard. The mate above was motioning them to hurry. Conyngham hastened a little, and in doing so almost ran into the arms of a lady who, with her daughter, was just descending. He started back, tipped his hat, and begged pardon involuntarily, without raising his eyes. What was his surprise, then, to be addressed in the most cordial manner,—

"Oh, Mr. Foxe! I am so glad to have seen you before you left. We saw some friends away and felt sure we would meet you. You do not know how sorry we have been about your dreadful accident. We have sympathized most truly ever since Mr. Parkinson told us about it. Do be careful of yourself, and come back well as ever. You must come right up and see us the day you arrive."

All this was poured forth while Sykes was backing up the plank, and Foxey was bowing and blushing, and the daughter was smiling and warbling little chirps like a canary-bird of, "Yes, Mr. Foxe, indeed we do!" and "We are so sorry," and so on, and the mother talking a little louder and a little louder as Mr. Foxe was receding politely in the wake of the dumfounded Sykes. So they waved their handkerchiefs from the deck as the steamer backed off, and Mrs. Rittenhouse and her daughter beamed upon their diminishing figures a mellow gaze of regretful radiance as if they were taking leave of their next of kin.

And Sykesey said to Foxey, "If signs and wonders have anything to do with the matter, your grave will probably be kept green. There will be a resurrection in about six weeks, and your late lamented social corpse will gather its dry bones and rise again."

And Foxey said to Sykesey, "There is no death,—no social death."

THE SOLDIER'S AID SOCIETY.

I.

"And with velvet pansies, around like a bower,
The maiden found her mystic flower;
Now, gentle flower, I pray thee tell
If my lover loves me, and loves me well."

MR. BRAYTON'S house was a large double mansion, white, with green blinds; it was set a little way back from the street, and upon each side of the straight path, leading from the gate to the door, were broad flower-beds filled with plants of every variety. These beds were bordered with a narrow edge of box, and the whole establishment bore the air of old-time New England aristocracy. On this particular afternoon the front door, with its serpent knocker of brass, stood wide open, as if to welcome the ladies of the village who were going *en masse* to attend the Soldier's Aid Society.

Jennie Parker, the belle of the town, with her pink cheeks and golden hair, was walking rapidly down Front Street, arm in arm with her friend Lillie Watson, from Philadelphia, who was disclosing a wonderful scheme that some of the girls whom she knew had tried to interest the soldiers and themselves.

"You see, Jennie," she said, "Hettie made six pairs of mittens for our box last winter, and in every one she put a note, and, would you really believe it, she had five answers."

"Why, Lillie," exclaimed her friend, "did she sign her real name to them?"

"Certainly she did, and I think some of her notes must have been very silly, for she is a great flirt, and I never liked her; but any way, after that ever so many tried it."

"It would be splendid!" said Jennie. "I'll tell them this afternoon about it. But did you try it, Lillie, and did you get a letter?"

Lillie blushed and tossed her head, but after some coaxing displayed a brass button, which she had made into a pin and wore at her neck, saying, however, that she would tell nothing more until that night.

As they neared the house Lillie asked, "Who is this Miss Brayton whose house we are going to?"

"Oh, she is an old maid, but her father is the wealthiest man in town, and she started the 'Soldier's Aid' here; she runs all the guilds and such things, and she does have the loveliest flowers, especially pansies; she has every variety, and they are in blossom all the year round. People say she had a love-affair years ago and gave up a splendid man, Mr. Carleton, simply because he was an atheist."

"How very silly she must be! I suppose she would be too priggish to put notes in any of the things?" asked Lillie.

"Oh, dear, yes, she is too old for romance; she must be thirty-five if she is a day," exclaimed the pretty seventeen-year-old maiden.

The prim New England matrons looked aghast at the idea of notes being sent about promiscuously with their daughters' names attached, but the girls tossed their heads and looked defiant. The Saturday following was appointed for the packing of the barrels, and the ladies chosen for the work were Miss Helena Brayton, Mrs. Martin, and Jennie Parker, whose friend Lillie offered to assist.

That night, when Helena Brayton went to her room, she unlocked a small writing-desk, and taking out a case which contained an ambrotype of Ferdinand Carleton, looked long and earnestly at it. Then taking out a package of letters, she sat down by her table and read for some time. One envelope contained a bunch of faded pansies, tied with a violet ribbon. "I never cease to think of him," she said, musingly; and the remembrance of their last interview rose up before her. "It would be worse than foolish for me to write any note and put with that dressing-gown," she thought, as her eyes turned to a gray robe which lay on her lounge, and which she had just finished. "I would not want any one but him to get the note," she murmured, "and yet I certainly don't want him to be wounded and laid up in the hospital; but all the time it has seemed as if

I were making that robe for him. I had the quilted satin of blue just because I knew he would like it. But it is not likely that he would get either the dressing-gown or the note, and perhaps he has forgotten me any way."

She laid her arms upon the table, and resting her head upon them, thought and thought. Ah! no one knew what those twelve long years had been to Helena. Always bright and cheerful before her father and friends, faithful in her church-work and social relations, but always taking as retired a position as possible, none could have imagined the intensity of the hidden sorrow of her heart. She had acted from principle in breaking off her engagement with Ferdinand after his views towards Christianity had become so *outré*. And yet how often the agonizing thought presented itself that possibly she had done wrong, and that if she had married him she might have influenced him to better things.

Before the articles made by the Soldier's Aid were packed, Helena had placed in the breast-pocket of the dressing-gown, which she had made with such care, an envelope containing a sonnet she had composed and a few large, fresh, purple pansies, carefully pressed and tied with violet ribbon. "The pansy was his favorite flower," she murmured. She blamed herself for the wild idea that Colonel Carleton would ever wear her dressing-gown, or if he did that he would know that she sent it, for she had signed no name or initials, merely dating the paper, and putting the name of her village at the close of the lines she had written. The next week the barrels were on their way to Washington.

The hollyhocks withered, the asters and marigolds hung their frosted heads, and the flower-beds looked deserted, for autumn was hastening on with rapid steps towards winter, and still the cruel war continued, and Helena Brayton heard nothing of the fate of the dressing-gown.

II.

"By all those token flowers that tell
What words can ne'er express so well."

A FEW nights after the battle of Bull Run, Ferdinand Carleton and his partner were sitting in his bachelor apartments talking over the alarming condition of the country. Both were smoking, and Carleton held in his hand the *New York Times.*

"Then your mind is made up positively to enlist, is it?" asked Mr. Sedgwick.

"Oh, yes; I want to go; life isn't any too interesting for me to be afraid to risk losing it."

"That is absurd, Carleton; a fellow with your position and talents can make life answer all his desires. You could get almost any of the girls in New York; and you ought to be married any way. Mrs. Sedgwick says so; she says you are just the man to make any girl happy."

"Oh, I'm a confirmed old bachelor. I'll be forty before long if I don't get killed in the war."

"That's just it; you have no time to lose, and ought to see about making some girl happy right away."

Carleton laughed rather bitterly, and then as Mr. Sedgwick rose to go he rose also, saying he would go part way and then drop in at the club and have a game of billiards. As they passed a flower-stand Carleton stopped, and buying a bunch of roses, he asked Mr. Sedgwick to take them to his wife and thank her for her good opinion of him, but to tell her that he was incorrigible; and then selecting for himself a few rich purple pansies, he fastened them in his button-hole, and bidding his partner good-night, he went into the club. He sat up late that night smoking and thinking, not of the present nor the future, but of the past: and as he handled the now withered pansies, he thought of a sweet young girl with pansies in her hair and at her belt, and he seemed to see her pinning one on his coat. The next week he joined the Seventh Regiment. Fortune favors the brave, and at the time our story opens he had become Colonel Carleton.

Helena Brayton had seen the promotion mentioned in the Boston papers, and the news had thrilled her with love;

but she thought that the sensation she experienced was merely a high order of patriotism.

One night after a fearful battle Colonel Carleton was bending over a dying comrade who lay bleeding on the battle-field, and was doing all in his power to alleviate his friend's suffering, hoping each moment that an ambulance would come to convey him to some place of shelter.

"Is there anything more, Hal, that I can do for you?" he asked.

"Oh, colonel, if you could say some prayer for me; my wife's prayer-book was in my knapsack, but I don't know where it is now; but you can say one, for it's growing so dark and——"

The hot blood mounted to the colonel's forehead. What prayers did he know? He had not entered a church since he went the last time with Helena, and had ridiculed the service and pained her tender and devout heart. What should he do? He dared not in the presence of the angel Death, tell this poor fellow that prayer was useless, as he had believed for years. He now saw by a strange, inward light that his own life had been one great mistake, and that he himself had lived and believed a lie for years.

There is such a thing as feeling truth; Colonel Carleton felt it that night; he felt an invisible presence about him; he felt that God was Truth, and that the Truth was God; and that unbelief, agnosticism, and atheism were the weapons of the Prince of Darkness.

"Say just one, colonel; it is so cold and dark," gasped the dying soldier; and in the silence that followed his last request his soul was called home, while the full moon shone down upon Ferdinand Carleton kneeling by a dead body.

Helena Brayton's twelve years of prayer for him were beginning to find their fulfilment.

III.

"There's a sweeter flower than e'er
Blushed on the rosy spray,—
A brighter star, a richer bloom
Than e'er did western heaven illume
At close of summer day.
'Tis Love, the last, best gift of heaven;
Love gentle, holy, pure."

MRS. POMROY, the head nurse of the Union Hotel Hospital at Georgetown, resolved that the very best of care must be given to Colonel Carleton for several reasons: in the first place he was very severely wounded and needed extra attention; then he was a favorite colonel and had distinguished himself in several recent battles, and, moreover, Mrs. Pomroy had known him in New York before the war, and he had been the last one to minister to her dear brother Hal, who died on the battle-field. All these reasons prompted her to feel great interest in him, although she would not have neglected any other patient for him who needed her.

"When do you suppose I can sit up, Mrs. Pomroy?" asked the colonel one day; "it seems as if I had been lying here forever."

"Very likely you can to-morrow, colonel; and a box of goods was sent us from Washington to-day, and I have selected a love of a dressing-gown from it for you. Would you not like to see it?" she asked, hoping it would rouse his interest.

"Yes, I believe I would," he said, slowly. "I did not suppose you would let me sit up this week."

Mrs. Pomroy went to the store-room, and returned with a package done up in soft tissue-paper and laid it upon the bed.

"Now I must leave you," she said, pleasantly, "and you can admire it until you fall asleep."

As Colonel Carleton feebly unwrapped the tissue-paper a delicate perfume was perceptible, and a strange thrill seemed to run through his heart. "She always used such faint, dainty perfumes," he thought. As he removed the last wrapping he exclaimed, "It is just like the one she saw

me have on that morning when her father was so ill and she was so worried."

Involuntarily he slipped his hand into the inner breast-pocket and drew out an envelope, directed in the hand-writing he used to know so well,—"For a wounded soldier." Trembling, he broke the seal, and taking out the letter unfolded it; as he did so there dropped out three purple pansies; on the violet ribbon with which they were tied was inscribed with gold letters the meaning of the word pansy,—"*Pensez à moi.*"

The tears sprung to his eyes, for he was weak and ill, and the emotions are not under control at such times. He pressed the pansies to his lips, and then smoothing out the sheet of paper, read the following lines:

"FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH."

The world may well be called a battle-field,
  And life is one great strife to win a crown;
  But not the hope of fickle earth's renown
Inspires true heroes not to faint nor yield
E'en if the foe a mighty weapon wield;
  For heavenly music can earth's war-cries drown,
  Or change to smiles the tyrant's cruel frown.
And he, who at the Throne of Grace hath kneeled
To learn the secrets of Eternal Love,
  Cares not to win a diadem of gold,
    But like a loyal soldier, brave and true,
Obeys the Captain's orders from above,
  And armed with Faith and Truth may well be bold,
    For when the campaign's o'er the Crown is sure.

DEERING, September 13.

"Why, colonel, what makes your pulse so rapid to-night? and what's the meaning of all this fever? Indeed I cannot let you sit up to-morrow," said the surgeon as he stopped on his evening rounds.

"Oh, but I really feel better, doctor," said the colonel, "and I am very anxious to begin to sit up."

"Well, well, we'll see," said the surgeon.

"I want to send a despatch to-night, doctor; if I write it now will you take it?" asked the patient.

"Certainly; but you had better let me write it for you, colonel."

"Oh, no; let me try."

"Well, here is paper and pencil; but I think that arm is too weak; if you can't do it, I will."

The physician thought to himself that there certainly was a lady in the case, and if so, that would account for the excited condition of his patient.

The next morning when Mr. Brayton and his daughter were sitting at the breakfast-table, a servant brought in a telegram directed to "Miss Helena Brayton." It ran thus:

"UNION HOTEL HOSPITAL, GEORGETOWN, D. C.,
"November 10, 1862.

"The dressing-gown has come. I shall enlist under the banner of your Captain. Will you come and help me?

"FERDINAND CARLETON."

This accounts for the fact that the wedding of the sedate Helena Brayton took place in the dreary hospital at Georgetown.

A PITIFUL SURRENDER.

ONE warm November day, some five-and-twenty years ago, I was sitting in an easy-chair smoking my cigar late at night in one of the cottages at Key West Barracks. Our little command had just returned from our summer camp on Indian Key, an island of the Florida reef not over half a mile in circumference, where we spent seven long months to avoid the yellow fever, which was raging at Key West all summer. How weary we grew of our narrow confines, and how beautiful and wide the world seemed to me that day! But the excitement of landing and seeing the men safely housed in their barracks was over now, and I sat alone with my thoughts; the other officers and the ladies of the garrison had gone to an entertainment given at the hotel in the city by the naval officers of the ships that had just been released from their summer quarantine at Sand Key light.

It was the anniversary of my birthday, and I was turning over in my hands, thoughtfully and sadly, a letter which I had just received, then tossed it on the table with a sigh. In the succession of hard puffs at my cigar that followed, the words of the old song in the opera "Der Trompeter von Säkkingen" came to me:

> "Das ist das End vom Lied.
> Das end vom alten Liede,
> Mir fällt kein neues ein,
> Als schweigen und vergessen,
> Und wann vergäss ich dein?"

The house I was in was at the time the quarters of my friend Lieutenant Jack Villiers, who had asked me to share it with him till I had quarters assigned me. The cottages of the garrison are five in number, three on one side of the parade, two on the other, and those on the same side are separated by considerable distances, with large grounds about them, so that they stand quite alone. Each cottage

is entirely surrounded by a wide piazza, and the stairs to the bedrooms run up from the piazza, outside the rooms on the first floor, to a little landing which opens into a narrow hall, on either side of which the bedrooms are situated. The drawing-room has several sliding doors with glass windows (windows and doors are one on the lower floor), and as I took the last puff at my cigar I could hear the "Norther" that was coming up shake the doors and make them rattle as if to try them, and I could see the moonlight straying through and playing fitfully on the floor; the banyan-tree without, as it nestled close up to the eaves to get out of the cold, was sighing deeply, too.

Suddenly my eyes were held by a large photograph hanging before me on the wall, only dimly visible in the pale lamplight. It was one of those faces that fix the attention at once and are never forgotten,—a dark complexion, nearly black hair, large, poetic eyes, with a soft look that is enhanced in effect by long lashes, a delicately chiselled outline, and a straight nose, but a mouth wherein the lines are weak and wavering. The eyes are the fascinating element, yet even in them there lurks an effect not quite agreeable, a something that attracts and yet repels,—one cannot help looking, and yet one longs for the freer air,—like the poor bird under the gaze of the serpent.

A gust of wind outside disturbed my thoughts, and I rose and tried to shake off a feeling of gloom and sadness, but the dark eyes followed me about the room. I felt uncomfortable and touched the bell. Gus, our mulatto boy from the Bahamas, answered, and I asked him various questions about the pictures in the room, but avoided the photograph, hoping he would speak of that of his own accord, but his eyes never rested on it. Once, when I questioned him about a Venetian water-color hanging next to it, I thought I detected a little tremor in his voice and a frightened look on his face, but only for an instant. He talked freely about the other pictures, little incidents connected with them, some of his own experience (for he had been with Villiers a long time), some that Villiers himself had related, but he passed over the photograph as if it were not hanging there at all. I dismissed him to his home, a little shanty outside the reservation, where he lived with his aged mother, and

I was once more alone with the weird eyes of the photograph.

I felt more and more uncomfortable, and, as it was growing late, I started for my bedroom, the dark eyes following my every movement as I went out through the door, cold shivers running through me as I mounted the stairs leading up from the piazza, startled occasionally by a moan and a sigh from the banyan-tree. I lay awake for some time, that face visible wherever the shadows fell, but, finally worn out, I was about to sink into sleep when a clock began to strike the midnight hour.

Hark! what is that? At the last stroke of the clock I heard something like footsteps on the piazza, then shoes creaking as if about to mount the stairs. I counted the steps; slowly and deliberately some one was coming up, pit, pat, pit, pat,—thirteen! The shoes creaked on the landing, and I half rose in bed and peered into the moonlight to see who had come at that late hour (for Villiers said he was going to stay all night with one of the naval officers, so it could not be he). Nobody appeared.

I rose, slipped on a loose robe and a pair of slippers, and went out on the landing; the banyan-tree was still sighing and moaning, the moon yet bathed the landscape in a flood of pale, yellow light, the wind was trying the glass doors more and more impatiently, and the air had grown very chill. I crept down and walked round the entire piazza, but there was nothing living visible. I entered the dining-room, and there in the moonlight, that touched them with an unearthly light, there, gazing at me still, were the strange eyes as I had left them, but the lips seemed to smile, grim and ghastly. I touched the gilt frame that surrounded it, to make sure it was all a reality; then tremblingly sought my couch once more (counting the steps as I mounted them, hoping there were more or less, yet knowing in my inmost soul that there were just thirteen, though I had never counted them before) to sleep a broken sleep.

The wind was blowing hard when I rose, and felt very cold to one accustomed for some time to continual Indian-summer weather; but in the sun, or in a place protected from the wind, it was still warm, so I dressed as usual in white summer clothing and a straw hat, but put on my

overcoat as a protection against the cold north wind, and then walked down the road to the little cottage where Mrs. Mitchell, the wife of a sergeant who had died of yellow fever a few years previous, kept our small mess of three. There I found the doctor and Villiers already at breakfast, and the former, after greeting me, remarked that I looked pale. I merely smiled, but Villiers, taking a better look at me, cried out,—

"By Jove, old fellow, you must have been celebrating all by yourself last night; did you have a birthday, or" (more gently and in a low tone) "did she fail to lead the card you wanted, merely making what Mac used to call, when he led the lowest card of his weakest suit, *a tentative play?*"

"Both, Jack, both; but my paleness is not due to either of these causes," I replied, laughing, and perhaps blushing a little, too, for Jack knew all my secrets. "I had a strange experience last night," I added, more seriously, for the feeling which the face in the photograph and the footsteps on the stairs had inspired was not yet quite gone.

The doctor whistled and said, "Go on," as if he half knew what was coming. So I related my experiences in full. Jack became pale and thoughtful as I proceeded, with a pained expression on his face, which was occasionally relieved by a bright and happy smile playing at the corners of his mouth, followed always by a deep-drawn sigh, while the doctor gravely observed me as if he were studying a patient.

When I concluded, the doctor began, banteringly,—

"How many of Jack's so-called Havanas did you smoke?"

But Jack interrupted him: "Doctor, I am afraid this is a little beyond the realm of medicine; the photograph has its history, and, as to the strange sounds, they are supposed to be the ghost of dear old Floyd, whom Mrs. Mitchell, by her excellent nursing, pulled through the yellow fever one summer. Ah, Mrs. Mitchell, perhaps it had been better had you been a poorer nurse!" To which she nodded assent and turned away with tears in her eyes. "But now, let Will go up to the post, doctor, in your ambulance, which is standing at the door, and mount his

guard (if it is not too late already), and after office-hours meet us at my quarters and I will tell you the story of the photograph."

I hurried off, but found the guard already mounted when I arrived; and so, chagrined and angry with myself, I reported to the commanding officer that I had missed my duty, but he assumed that there was some special reason for my neglect and smiled away my own displeasure. When I reached the house, after the morning's work was over, Villiers and the doctor were already comfortably settled in their chairs in the library, before the photograph. I glanced at it with an uncomfortable feeling of dread, and sat down with them. Villiers then proceeded with his tale:

"Before I went to the Point I attended the High School in Saint Louis, and among my companions was a young man, named Pierre Rossignol, a very pleasant playmate, always ready for any amusement, generous in a way, free with his money when he had any, and altogether a good fellow and a favorite with all. He was extremely handsome, dark, straight as an arrow, tall and well-proportioned, with fine-cut features and soft eyes with long eyelashes (giving him a gentle and sympathetic expression), and a great beau among the fair sex. Some days he would have his pockets full of small change, at other times he seemed really hungry as he munched the buns given him at luncheon: I remember it struck me as strange at the time.

"But, for all his good qualities and his popularity, it was evident to the most casual observer that he usually had what he wanted, that some one was continually doing something or other for him, and that he was petted and spoiled; he received these attentions as if they were his due; indeed, there was always, about everything he did, an element of selfishness. But, as he was good-natured and apparently anxious to please, most of the boys in their generosity forgave him, if, indeed, they ever observed this characteristic of his at all.

"He was very visionary in his ideas about his future, and spoke as if he expected some day to have a great fortune; and this impression among us, regarding his prospects, was strengthened by the fact that in speaking one

day about the dancing-school he attended, he let fall some remarks which indicated that he was already quite familiar with the gaming-table (he evidently spent his evenings after dancing-school there), which to us seemed a great thing at that time and only possible for very rich people.

"Altogether he was an interesting character. The first impression he produced was always good, yet he never seemed to care to take advantage of his powers of fascination, but rather gave an impression of indifference. After I left home I often wondered how the world would go with him, until one day, about two years ago, what was my astonishment, when, while I was sitting here in my chair thinking about him, he suddenly appeared in the door-way there!

"We greeted each other cordially, and then I noticed a female figure behind him, and he turned and introduced his wife; he added that he was on his wedding-tour, and was going over to Havana, and then to New York. The steamer, he said, would lie at the wharf in Key West till early in the morning.

"Floyd was here with me and took the greatest fancy to my former school-mate and at once engaged him in conversation, while I chatted with Mrs. Rossignol. She was a charming character, very young, almost a child, with light golden hair and clear blue eyes,—so clear that it was a pleasure to look into them,—with a frank and confiding way about her that won my poor heart at once."

> "'Just a mere child with sudden ebullitions,
> Flashes of fun, and little bursts of song,
> Petulant pains, and fleeting pale contritions,
> Mute little words of misery and wrong;
> Only a child of Nature's rarest making,
> Wistful and sweet,—and with a heart for breaking!'"

quoted the doctor. "Does that paint the picture?"

"Yes, that applies very well," continued Villiers; "but she seemed to have withal a sort of dread of her husband that was noticeable whenever he addressed her, or whenever I asked any questions relating to him, which naturally roused my sympathy. However, she seemed to be fond of him too, and he was very kind to her.

"Towards evening we sauntered down the beach, Floyd and Rossignol going on ahead, Floyd telling me in a low tone as he passed that I would find them at Captain Jack's; I walked with Mrs. Rossignol, and I shall never forget that walk. It was a beautiful day, and the pure white coral sand was packed hard and firm where the tide had gone out, the setting sun throwing a rosy veil over sky and water and beach. We sauntered along slowly, picking up a bright-colored shell now and then, or watching a hermit crab secrete himself in his stolen home, or a fiddler crab dancing his sidewise jig. I took her to the edge of the water and showed her, just covered by the water at low tide, a sea anemone clinging to the rock, with all its beautiful, delicately-colored tendrils displayed. She took the greatest delight in all these little things, and to me they acquired an interest such as they had never possessed before, and which they have preserved ever since.

"Finally, we stood on the wharf at the steamer-landing, and she looked up with a start. Then she held out her hand very simply and naturally. 'Thank you,' she said; 'it seems hard to believe that you are all real here, and that this is not a fairy island in this beautiful pale-green sea. I have been so happy!' Doctor, you may smile, but I confess, when the coldness, the selfishness, the uncharitable spirit of this world has at times embittered my heart, I have remembered her and felt that it is still beautiful and good.

"I did not go to Captain Jack's: I was not in the mood. I went slowly back as we had come. When I retired for the night, Floyd had not yet come home. I lay awake thinking over the strange events of the day, and did not fall asleep till towards morning. I was awakened by a sharp report near by, and jumped up and hurried across to Floyd's room (the one overhead, where you slept last night, Will), and found Floyd on the floor in the corner, a smoking revolver in his hand. He did not speak again. Next day I learned that he had lost heavily to Rossignol; and in the evening came this photograph of my former school-mate. The tale is told.

"Yesterday was the anniversary of that eventful day, and a year ago I experienced just such a night as you did

last night; that is the reason I remained down-town yesterday. I did not suppose that it would affect you."

Nearly two years had passed since those November days at Key West, and I was enjoying a tramp in the Black Forest during my summer leave of absence. I had left Villiers at Baden-Baden because he preferred to be in the crowd at the Conversations Haus. One day, as I returned, tired and dusty, from a two-days' walk over the Kniebis, the Triberg, and the Kandel, to Freiberg, which I used as a centre from which to radiate on my various excursions, I concluded, instead of going to my rooms, to get a mug of beer and some supper in the little garden of the Alte Burse, a restaurant much frequented by the German officers, partly because the beer was good, and partly because it was served by a very pretty bar-maid,—*die liebe Marie*, as we called her when she was good enough to come to our table and chat with us a while.

I sat down at a table in the far corner of the garden with a young artillery officer and a student of the university, both of whom I had known for some time. We talked gayly for a while, but when my supper came the others bade me good-night. The garden had filled up gradually since my arrival, and almost every seat was taken except those at my table. I had just finished eating, when a man dressed in rather a shabby suit of clothes sat down at my table and called for a glass of beer in German that had a decided English accent. I did not notice him much at first, but after a time it struck me that there was something familiar about his face, and I could not help glancing at him occasionally. What was it that made me feel so uncomfortable as I looked at him? My interest grew deeper, and finally, as his eyes met mine, I could scarcely suppress an exclamation, for surely I had seen those eyes before, and under circumstances not altogether pleasant,—soft, dark eyes they were, and I became nervous under their gaze. But I could not recall the man.

Marie came up and asked me how I enjoyed my supper, and after a few pleasant words and a "dynamic glance" or two, such as only a bar-maid who has been to Kissengen and Carlsbad can give, and which is even then vouchsafed only to those who give Trink-geld in American fashion,

she started away to refill my beer-mug. It may have been my imperfect German, or my English clothes, or my apparent good nature, or perhaps the combination of all these, that induced my neighbor to open the conversation; at any rate, he did so, remarking in English:

"This out-door life of the Germans and the simplicity of their enjoyments have a great attraction for me. Do you not find it an agreeable change from our hurried existence at home?"

"Yes," I replied; "it must be particularly so to a business man, or any one confined all day to his office. I met such a one the other day who was so delighted to be over here out of the reach of telegrams!"

"I find it so," he said; "my brewery keeps me very much occupied, because it has grown enormously of late."

Under the long, dark lashes I could see that his eyes wandered a little as he made this remark, and did not look at me. We conversed for some time, and he grew more and more enthusiastic about the brewery. Suddenly he asked me:

"What is your business? Or are you merely travelling for pleasure?"

"I am in the army, and am taking a little vacation."

"Ah! Have you ever met my friend,—my school-mate,—Lieutenant Villiers?"

My heart stopped beating for a moment. I could hear the banyan-tree moaning and the north wind shaking the glass doors. It was he of the photograph, and its strange, fascinating eyes were gazing into mine in real life!

It was some time before I could collect my thoughts. My neighbor grew more confidential when I told him that Villiers was an intimate friend of mine, and finally confided to me that he was there to purchase the secret for making the very beer we were drinking. The arrangements, he told me, were almost completed, but he found himself short of money, and could not at once pay certain little fees and incidental expenses connected therewith, and yet he did not like to leave without completing the purchase. He added that if I could let him have fifty marks temporarily he would settle the matter that evening. I gave him the money, and

he took down my address. After a little general conversation he departed.

Next day I went back to Baden-Baden and found Villiers at the Victoria. I did not tell him of the meeting at Freiburg. In the afternoon we took a stroll out through the Lichtenthaler Allee, and returned past the Conversations Haus on our way towards the Promenaden Platz, when, as we passed the Trink Halle, opposite the Hotel de l'Europe, I saw on the corner balcony of the first étage of the hotel what looked like the figure of Rossignol, dressed just as he was when I met him. Villiers was in a brown study, staring straight ahead, so he observed nothing; and as I had thrown aside my tramping-costume and had donned my morning suit, there was no danger of my being recognized, so I looked hard at the balcony and the figure there. Yes, it was certainly he. While I was wondering if he could be there all alone, a female figure appeared behind him, a baby in her arms, and my question was answered. We walked on, Villiers and I, and I could not help thinking how strange it was that she, whom Villiers was probably at that moment thinking of, but supposed far away over the sea, whom he had known but a short afternoon on a certain coral-beach in a far-off land, she of the light golden hair and deep blue eyes,—

> "Whose voice, attuned above
> All modulation of the deep-bowered dove,
> Is like a hand laid softly on the soul,"

should stand there on the balcony, with her one-year-old baby, thinking, perhaps, of that same coral-beach!

We walked home almost in silence. In the evening I called on Mrs. Rossignol, sending word with my card that I was a friend of Lieutenant Villiers. She received me at once, and, after informing me that her husband had gone out for the evening, inquired how my friend was, and what was he doing, and was he happy? She spoke of her visit to Key West with girlish glee; it was evidently a pleasant memory, that was all. But *was* it all? Why, then, that little sigh, and why are the beautiful blue eyes dim for a moment; but, above all, why that sad look in the eyes of one so young? I learned (what I particularly wanted to

know) that they had only recently come (from Homburg von der Höhe, I think it was), and were going to remain for some time. I determined to take Villiers to Paris in the morning, and, after a brief stay there, to start with him for home.

On my way to my rooms I concluded that I would first look into the gaming-rooms, and so turned my steps in that direction. As I sauntered through the long rooms, glancing along the line of faces intent upon the turn of a card, or the whirl of a wheel, I recognized, at one of the tables, a dark face, watching eagerly the little pile of gold pieces in front of him, and, as he raked in his winnings with his thin fingers convulsively, I saw him pass half of them to his neighbor, a lady, deeply veiled.

I passed out into the street again. A light was still burning in the corner room of the Hotel de l'Europe, and my heart went out to her who sat there waiting, to her whose thoughts are centred in the little cradle there in the corner,—

> "Whose endless hopes revolve about
> A planet, *ætat* one."

On a cold and rainy day I arrived from Lucerne over the Brünig at Interlaken; my heaviest overcoat could not keep me warm; I walked restlessly up and down the Hoehenweg in front of the hotel; my own rooms were cold, the smoking-room was cold, the reading-room was dreary, everybody looked depressed. I paid my bill, intending to go to Berne on the evening train,—anywhere where it was warmer,—when the clerk said,—

"Stay another day; there was a fresh fall of snow on the mountains to-day, and it will be clear to-morrow."

"Very well," I said; "I'll keep my rooms."

Next morning when I awoke the sunlight was streaming through the window; I dressed hurriedly and walked out on the piazza. There, between two dark precipices of the nearer mountains, stood the Jungfrau, a pure mass of the purest, whitest snow, glistening in the sun. Can anything be more lovely and beautiful!

I heard an exclamation of glad surprise behind me, and, turning, found myself face to face with Mrs. Rossignol.

She was evidently pleased to see me, and I confess it was a great pleasure to me to look into her serene blue eyes again, to see that gentle face so bright in its loveliness, to hear her low sweet voice as she inquired about my own doings first, and then about Villiers. They had never met since that November afternoon on the beach at Key West, yet she seemed to remember him as if it had been but yesterday. I was very glad he had decided to remain in Baden-Baden.

We had a long talk, we two, in the sunlight, there before Nature's great masterpiece of scenery, and she talked freely about herself and her boy, but she did not once mention her husband's name. Finally, I asked her how long she was going to stay in Switzerland.

"Oh, why, I am going to Paris to-morrow, and then to Havre," and a little shadow passed over her face, "to meet my husband, who is coming back on the French steamer with my little boy," and then the shadow passed away; "he has been on a short visit to his grandmother."

Pretty and young as she was, there was a something in the expression of her face that spoke of deep, deep thoughts; ah, yes, life was not all she had pictured it in her girlhood days. But how brave she was! Not one word of complaint or regret; always bright and cheerful. Even as I stood there, thinking of all this, she turned with a cry of delight, caught up a rosy-cheeked boy and tossed him up and caught him again, then ran away for him to catch her:

> "I know the children run,
> Seeing her come, for naught that I discover,
> Save that she brings the summer and the sun."

That night, as I lay in bed thinking of Rossignol, it suddenly occurred to me that I could not let Mrs. Rossignol travel alone with her maid all the way to Havre, and that I might as well go on the same train and look after her welfare a little without appearing to do so, especially as I knew full well that this trifling act of kindness would greatly please Villiers if he ever heard of it.

She did not seem surprised to find me on the boat, and we had a charming morning for our journey over the lake of Thun, and then the train hurried us along on our way to

Paris. There I learned that the French steamer was not due for another day, so I persuaded Mrs. Rossignol to stop over for a few hours at Rouen, where I could show her all the places of interest, as I had once spent three weeks there, in my rambles, with a young architect from Philadelphia; and then she could go on with her maid, while I would look up my old friends and make my way leisurely to Baden-Baden.

On our arrival at Rouen we started at once for St. Ouen, but in the square around the cathedral we came upon a crowd of people, through which it was difficult to find our way. Our main object at first was to get by as soon as possible, but presently we heard some one near by whisper breathlessly to his neighbor something about a wreck. We both looked up, and just before us was a sailor telling a thrilling tale to an excited little group of listeners about him. We instinctively stopped to listen.

"There had been a dense fog for twenty-four hours," he continued, "and we knew we were near the entrance to the channel, somewhere in the vicinity of the Scilly Islands, when suddenly, just about daybreak, there was a terrific crash, and a rumbling like that of thunder, and we sailors knew that she was on the rocks. The life-boats were manned at once, but the passengers were wild with excitement, and men and women jumped into the water, or rushed wailing and crying up and down the decks, or crowded into the boats, all in the greatest confusion. Soon the sea was alive with human beings struggling to keep afloat by swimming or by clinging to pieces of timber floating about."

"What became of Pourquié," some one asked; "is he saved?"

"Ah, poor Pourquié," said the sailor, "we have made many voyages together, but that was the last; yet Rouen should be proud of her townsman Pourquié, for he was a noble fellow. There was among the passengers a little boy with blue eyes and dark hair; his father spent much of his time in the smoking-room, so the little fellow was always on deck, and he was such a beautiful child, so frank and manly, with such winning ways and entirely without fear, that the sailors all loved him, and on fair days, when the captain would let them, they would carry him up into the

rigging, and we all became deeply attached to the little fellow. When the ship went down and our little boat had all it could hold, and we were about to make for the land, we saw Pourquié in the water, clinging to a spar with one arm and holding up the little boy with the other, and I heard him call to me to take him, but he sank before we could reach him, and little Pierre with him!"

"Pierre!" I hear a wild cry at my side, and Mrs. Rossignol lay in a swoon.

We are again at Baden-Baden, Villiers and I, enjoying the beautiful days and the crowds of people and the music. I told him the story of the wreck, and how we had heard it; but I did not tell him that I had brought Mrs. Rossignol to Baden-Baden, and installed her in her old rooms in the Hotel de l'Europe, opposite the Trink Halle. Only a few passengers on the French steamer had been saved out of the wreck, and they had disappeared to their several homes; and although Rossignol and little Pierre were reported among the lost, Mrs. Rossignol believed her husband still alive.

It was a long time before she recovered from the shock of that day in Rouen, and during that long period I was almost her only visitor. She kept her rooms, and lived very quietly, but after a time she began to long for the free air again, and then we used to walk up to the old castle of an afternoon, at first only occasionally, but soon quite regularly, almost daily, until Villiers (who preferred walking on a level to any climbing) began to wonder how any one could become so fond of that old castle.

"Why do you climb that hill almost every afternoon, Will? Ah, I see! there is some Lorelei on the rocks up there."

"Come up and see her, Jack, for she is very beautiful. You drive up to the castle to-morrow, about three, and wait for me there, and if your little boat isn't a wreck on the rocks before the day is over, while you are absorbed in watching the Lorelei 'combing her golden hair,' why, I'll give you a dinner at the Café Madrid, out in the Bois, when we go to Paris."

So it was arranged, and so they met. Villiers did not

know that he really loved this little woman with the light-golden hair until they met again : it seemed before as if he might have loved her had he met her long before that walk on the beach, so that her memory was only a tender regret, but when he saw her face to face he knew. And she? Ah, well! she was still waiting for Rossignol to come back. But the days passed by, and no news of Rossignol came. Villiers was very gentle and delicate in his quiet devotion. At first he met us just a little way below the castle and walked up with us; then he would meet us half-way up; and finally, just outside the hotel (he would never go alone to take her for a walk). Both believed for a time that their interest in one another was the purest friendship,—nothing more. But Villiers was the first to be undeceived (by my assistance, of course). How fond he had suddenly grown of climbing hills! So the days, and weeks, and months passed by.

But now I could see that Mrs. Rossignol was making herself very unhappy, and then I had a long talk with Jack one day, and convinced him that he had to go away, for the simple reason that, as Mrs. Rossignol believed her husband to be still alive, there was nothing else for him to do; and so I brought him home. It was very hard, after all the bold strategy with which I had opened the campaign, and the fine tactics which Villiers had displayed on the field of battle, to be thus forced to beat a hasty and ignominious retreat.

The following year, one quiet, peaceful, sunshiny October day, Jack and I were sitting in front of our quarters at Fort Point (near San Francisco), the little house down by the water's edge, there where the waves, turned obliquely by the wall of the fort as the tide rolls in through the Golden Gate, curl high into the air.

"You say she is visiting at the general's in the Presidio?"

"Yes; the general's wife used to know her at home before she was married."

"Jack, do me a favor and call there this afternoon at three o'clock. I will drop in later and walk home with you. I want you to do this for a particular reason."

"What is the use, Will?" said Jack, wearily; "but all right, I'll go."

At about a quarter after three I was ushered into the general's drawing-room, and found Mrs. Rossignol and Jack talking in a painfully formal way. They were quite alone in the room. After a few general remarks I drew my chair between them and said,—

"I have had a strange experience."

"What was it, a ghost?" said she.

"No, but something more wonderful. You know when I came to join the regiment out here I had authority to come by way of the isthmus. Well, one day when the sea was rather rough, the captain of the ship and I began talking about experiences in storms and shipwrecks, and he presently remarked, 'I had one once that I never want repeated! It was on the Scilly Islands, when I was second officer on one of the French steamers: you may remember reading about it.' He gave a vivid description of it all, and then I asked him if he remembered a man named Rossignol among the passengers.

"'Yes, very well,' he said; 'he was in the card-room all day long and most of the night, and the betting, as you know, often runs very high, but he was very bold at any game and seemed to care for nothing else; but when the crash came he was one of the first to rush for the boats. The boat he was in was crushed in the excitement, and as my boat was passing along, picking up the men and women in the water as fast as we could, I saw him ahead, clinging to a spar, a sailor at the other end of it. Near by another sailor was holding up his little boy, Pierre, and crying for help. Rossignol did not stir, but the sailor at the other end of the spar jumped and caught the boy as he sank, then swam for the spar again, but Rossignol was no longer on it; his hold had slipped and he went down, and did not rise again. Before we could reach the boy, his brave protector sank away exhausted, calling to one of the men in my boat with his latest breath not to mind him but to take the boy, but we were too late.'"

There were some moments of silence, and then the widow rose and gave both her hands to Jack without a word, tears filling her eyes, and—I retired. The campaign was ended, the enemy had run up the white flag, but was it not *a pitiful surrender?*

Years have flown by since then, and even as I sit here, in my old bachelor rooms, Jack and his wife go by the window smiling into each other's faces; and there she turns to send a little smile in my direction, for she knows I am sitting here, and I inwardly bless the sunny hair and the beautiful blue eyes.

"Oh, what tears have they shed, gentle eyes! Oh, what faith has it kept, tender heart! If love lives through life, and survives through all sorrow, and remains steadfast with us through all changes, and in all darkness of spirit burns brightly, and exists with the very last gasp and throb of the faithful bosom, whence it passes with the pure soul, beyond death, surely it shall be immortal!"

THE STORY OF A RECRUIT.

THE Seminole Indians in the southern part of Florida were on the war-path. Troops were ordered to concentrate at Tampa, where an expedition was being organized to take the field against them. Recruits were wanted to fill up Uncle Sam's depleted ranks. Here was an opportunity to win rank, honor, and fame. I went to a recruiting-officer and offered myself as a candidate for admission into Uncle Sam's service. Although a minor, I managed to overcome the scruples of the officer through the assistance of his sergeant, who had previously posted me in regard to age. I was then sent to Governor's Island, and donned the "army blue." After a short course of squad drill I joined a detachment of recruits under orders for Florida. We embarked on a sailing-vessel for Tampa, and after encountering heavy storms off Cape Hatteras and in the Gulf of Mexico, we arrived at Tampa. A day's rest was given us, then the march was taken up for the interior, to the camp of the company we had been assigned to, and arrived on New-Year's day, 1850, I feeling tired, weary, and foot-sore.

The next morning we were marched to the tent of the captain, who was pacing back and forth in front of it with one hand behind his back, holding a descriptive list. He was waiting to have a look at his new recruits.

The calling of the names and inspection over, he made a few brief remarks, to the following effect: "Those who merit good treatment shall have it; and those that do not merit it will surely catch the devil," and with this gentle reminder we were dismissed.

Although a recruit, I was naturally curious about the officer to whose fostering care Uncle Sam had transferred me. During the inspection he impressed me as being somewhat of a martinet.

He was about fifty years of age and over six feet high. His face was covered with a stubby beard and moustache,—not much of the face to be seen except the nose and sharp

blue eyes looking sternly from under heavy eyebrows. He wore a faded and well-worn uniform, coat buttoned up to the chin, and underneath a high stock. The shoulder-straps were in keeping with the coat, on which were faded gold leaves (brevet major) that he had won in Mexico. His long legs were encased in tight-fitting, coarse, blue pants, that were so short as to expose the gray stockings under a pair of number twelve army shoes the color of the sandy soil he stood on.

The "devil" was the most emphatic word I had ever heard him utter, and with all his apparent sternness, I found him to be a kind, just officer.

He was a Georgian by birth, a graduate at West Point, and in after-years held high rank in the Confederate army. And, in after-years, one of those recruits became captain of the same company (C, Seventh Infantry). Yes, rank, and the honor it carries with it, was won.

The first lieutenant of the company was on special duty as regimental adjutant. Staff duties of regiments were then performed by lieutenants detailed from companies, and with this exception and that of recruiting service, all officers were with their companies. The last-named duty was reserved for first lieutenants only.

The second lieutenant (Henry) was an old-time disciplinarian. I often thought the captain had him on his mind when he was cautioning some delinquent to "beware or he would surely catch the devil." Lieutenant Henry was once a recruit, having been promoted from the ranks for conspicuous bravery in the Mexican War. The regiment was at Point Isabel (now Fort Brown) when it was bombarded by Mexican troops. The stars and stripes were flying defiantly on the flag-staff. A shot from the guns of the enemy cut the halyards, and the flag fell to the ground,—an ill omen for the brave commander, Major Brown, who fell soon after mortally wounded. Henry, who was then a sergeant, sprang forward and picked up one end of the halyards, climbed the staff in the midst of a storm of shot and shell, rove them, and hoisted the flag after descending.

Four or five years after, Henry got into some trouble and resigned, went to Nicaragua with Walker, the filibuster, and returned to New Orleans with a wooden leg.

The camp was situated on an elevated pinery on the bank of a creek. The command consisted of a battalion of two companies under the senior officer,—the captain of my company. The officers' tents were wall, of the same pattern as are now in use, and the company tents common A, pitched or raised on log frames about three feet high, with plenty of space between them for ventilation.

A smooth-bore musket with twenty rounds of buck and ball cartridges and equipments was issued to each of us. We were then turned over to the tender mercies of Sergeant Maloney, who put us through a course of drill in accordance with the prescribed tactics of "Scott." The sergeant was a stern old veteran, tall, gaunt, and as straight as a ramrod. He had a peculiar way of fixing the attention of the squad by giving a wrong or catching command occasionally; whether intentionally or not, it was all the same to us, causing a slight misunderstanding that brought forth from the sergeant a few forcible remarks not in the "manual of arms," and a warning "never to obey a wrong command." With all of his peculiarities he was a brave soldier and a model of precision. He had been awarded a medal of honor for bravery in the Mexican War, and was as proud of the medal as if it had been the star of a brigadier-general.

Having become proficient in the "manual of arms," and mastering the complicated motions of "loading in nine times," I was assigned to a place in the rear rank of the company, and told to "keep it until the next batch of recruits joined, or otherwise ordered." I did not grumble,—to grumble would be infringing on the rights of veterans. I was soon made to understand that recruits were only to be seen, to obey, and but seldom heard, and, if I mistake not, a little of the same feeling existed among officers, all in the interest of discipline.

Although it was mid-winter, the days were pleasantly warm, but after sunset it became quite chilly. When retreat was over we congregated in groups around camp-fires in rear of the tents. Quite a number of the older soldiers had served in former campaigns against the Seminoles, and I believe nearly all had served in the Mexican war. One evening I went from group to group to hear and see what was going on, and finally came to one sitting around a

bright pine-knot fire smoking their pipes and fighting their battles over again; from the battle of Palo Alto, under General Taylor, and from Vera Cruz, under General Scott, to the capitulation of the City of Mexico. One veteran told of the capture of the wife of an army officer by the Seminoles. As told: "She had been visiting her husband, and was returning to Tampa under the protection of a small military escort. The Seminoles fired on the escort from an ambush, killing all of the soldiers but one, who had been wounded and allowed to live to tell the tale of woe." Montgomery, I think, was the name of the lady mentioned.

Stories were also told of sentinels having been found dead on their posts at night, their bodies covered with arrows of the stealthy savages. They were skilled in the art of imitating the hooting of owls and the cat-like cry of panthers. While one or more were imitating the birds or animals, so as to attract the attention of a sentinel, others would be crawling as noiselessly as snakes to their unsuspecting victim to strike him to the earth with tomahawks, and complete the act silently with arrows. By this time the pine-knots began to flicker and smoulder. The call for tattoo sounded, which ended the stories for that night. I had been an eager and attentive listener, and felt that some of the stories were not of a very encouraging nature to a young and inexperienced recruit. Nevertheless, I learned something of the life and duties of a soldier not found in army regulations nor in tactics. After roll-call I went to my tent and couch, the latter not very inviting,—a soft place in the sandy soil, made softer by adding an armful of palmetto leaves; a blanket folded in two, one-half under, the other over, with my knapsack for a pillow, on which I slept the sleep of the just, if not contented.

In the regular army a company of soldiers was generally composed of all classes of men, some well educated and others not so well. Men of many nations, trades, and vocations. It is curious to observe how these elements or different natures harmonize. Discipline is alike for all, but felt more keenly by the vicious and dissipated. Water seeks its level, and in time finds it. The same may be said of men in all stations in life. In the army the congenial

become comrades and friends through thick and thin, and often during life.

In the hour of peril many of the ante-war soldiers were qualified to command companies, regiments, and brigades. The close of the war found those who survived it holding rank and commissions in the regular and volunteer service. A glance at any of the old army registers shows it. Although many of them have passed away, we still find quite a number on the retired list, and a few remain in active service,—some of them field-officers, and others stand close to that rank. Not only in the line, but in some of the staff corps we also find officers who were in the ranks previous to the war. Their experience in Indian warfare and strict school of discipline prepared them for any position in the line of the army. This was the only school at that time, except tactical. It was presumed men over twenty-one years of age had finished their education before coming into the army in any capacity.

Meantime, we were ordered to break camp and march to Fort Meade; and from there to continue the march in a southern direction, following the course of Pease Creek (now Peace River), which empties into Charlotte Harbor. The march from Fort Meade was necessarily slow, having to cut a wagon-road through cypress swamps and ever-changing forests of pine, large water-oaks, palmettos, and magnolia-trees,—all shrouded in masses of drooping Spanish moss, so dense in places as to obscure the light of the sun. We found limes, and groves of wild orange-trees bearing fruit and blossom; very tempting to look at, but to the taste no better than an unripe persimmon. A kind called "bitter sweet" was palatable, but hard to distinguish from the sours until tasted. Fragrant jasmines, crèpe myrtles, and many other sweet-smelling plants and flowers were in profusion.

The songsters of the woods were there in numbers and varieties, the mocking-birds leading in a medley of song, their trilling notes ringing higher and higher in mockery of less-favored singing-birds.

Deer, turkey, and smaller game were plentiful. So were alligators, panthers, snakes, and scorpions.

Florida was surely the Seminole's paradise,—their "happy

hunting-ground." Game in the woods and fish in the lakes, creeks, and bays,—nature providing all necessaries of life without labor. No wonder it cost thousands of lives and millions of dollars before they were obliged to leave and go West to the Indian Territory.

How well I remember my first tour of guard-duty, and how I felt after being posted as a sentinel at midnight! It happened to be a post most distant from the guard, covering a flank of the camp. The night was dark and made still darker by the dense foliage of the trees. I was pacing my beat, keeping my eyes and *ears* open, and at the same time memorizing my orders. Owls commenced hooting near by, and at a distance I heard the cat-like cry of a panther, which was repeated nearer and nearer. I also heard the rustle of leaves on the trees, then on the ground. I stood as motionless as a statue,—my hair stood on end. The old soldier's story crossed my mind. I held my musket tighter and tighter ready to fire. In every flash of the fireflies I imagined that I saw eyes glare and glitter in the dark thicket beyond. I dare not fire; if it proved to be a false alarm I would surely be court-martialled. While undergoing these trying emotions I heard a sentinel call out the hour, and repeated by others in succession. This brought me to a sense of duty, and I called out, "Number 4, one o'clock, and all's well." Thus the voice of man silenced the owls and the panther.

I had fallen a few degrees in my own estimation, and mentally resolved never to get rattled again under such circumstances.

Well, it sometimes happens that the best resolutions of men fail, particularly soldiers. Mine did, and I may as well tell it now. About a year after the incident just related I was out on the Western plains. The command that I belonged to had been ordered to settle some trouble with the Arapahoe Indians. I was on a detached guard and a sentinel on post guarding a beef-herd. The night was calm and starry. The herd was resting and "chewing the cud of contentment" after feeding on sweet prairie grass. Everything around me was so still and quiet that I dropped into a musing mood. Suddenly my musings were brought to an abrupt and startling end by a thrilling and

prolonged howl, that was taken up by hundreds of others, such as I had never heard before. I thought, "It must be Indians trying to stampede the herd," as quite a number had been at our camp that afternoon. I was carrying a sabre with which I made a few cuts (not in tactics), and quickly returned it to the scabbard as a useless weapon, and as quickly raised a short musket that had been hanging at my right side by a belt over the left shoulder; with a finger on the trigger I stood in defiant expectation of being stricken down in the dark, or trodden down by the stampeding herd. Minutes passed, and yet there was no commotion in the herd, only a few of the cattle moved from their resting position. The howling died away into short, snappish yelps, similar to dogs in a fight. Finally, it dawned over my bewildered mind that a steer had been killed that evening for issue to the troops. A pack of coyotes had got on the scent of it and were devouring the refuse regardless of my presence; they fought over it as only hungry coyotes can fight; they not only devoured the refuse, but they devoured each other. In the fight, the weak and mangled succumbed to the strong and powerful. The next morning I found remnants of their skin and bushy tails on the ground.

I said that I had a sabre and a short musket. At that time I was a "galvanized dragoon," or, in other words, an infantry soldier mounted on a horse, and armed with a heavy sabre and a short muzzle-loading piece called a "musketoon." In cases of emergency, when dragoons were not convenient, infantry were on special occasions mounted and equipped, as stated, and sent out to do a little dragooning after Indians. I would say more about my experience as a dragoon in the West, but it should be remembered that I have not been relieved off post yet, and will go back to the "land of flowers."

Soon after the "owl and panther" incident, I heard steps approaching from the interior of the camp. In response to my challenge it turned out to be the "relief,"—a great relief, too, not only in person, but to my mind after the ordeal I had passed through.

Many things happen in the life of a soldier to keep him on the alert besides Indians and the bullets of an enemy.

The custom of calling the hours in the field at night has virtually ceased. Of course there are times and places when it would be a military crime to make any noise in a camp, or on the march, even to make a fire or light a match. At some of our Western forts we still hear the cheery calls of sentinels singing out the hour in the cold, clear, midnight air. The "All's well all round" of number one keeps them on the alert; and in memory carries me back to by-gone days.

The march, although slow (for reasons given), was maintained and conducted on the same military principles as exist at the present time for a small column of infantry. It was pretty well known that the Seminoles were in the Everglades, although, Indian-like, they were liable to strike when least expected. Old signs of their trail were found, but no sooner found than lost in the swamps; all leading in the direction named. Thus the march was continued until we arrived at Charlotte Harbor, where we rested a few days awaiting a steamer from Tampa. During the march there was a good deal of sickness, principally ague. Quinine mixed with whiskey was the usual prescription, which proved to be very effective. Of course, those that did not like the whiskey part could have water instead, but I believe all took their medicine as prescribed.

Meantime, the steamboat arrived with a detachment of troops on board; after we embarked, it proceeded down the harbor to St. Joseph's Island (now Pine Island), and increased our forces by taking aboard a portion of the troops that had been stationed there, and then steamed across the harbor and on up the Caloosahatchee River to a designated point, where we anchored in the channel for the night.

At early dawn the next morning row-boats were manned with detachments and started in line for the left bank of the river. As the boats touched ground we were ordered to jump out and form line; then deployed as skirmishers, advancing cautiously through a dense thicket of brush and palmettos, expecting at each step to be fired on. After advancing some distance we were halted and reinforced by a second line; the boats by this time having landed all of the troops. The soldiers not on the picket-line were pro-

vided with axes and such other tools as were necessary to clear off ground for a camp and hewing trees for a stockade. At that time it was considered very essential that a soldier should be as expert with an ax as with his musket, and many of them were, but I must confess that I was not of that number. I never could get the hang of an ax,—that is, to strike twice in the same place. Nevertheless, I was made useful in other ways. The life of a soldier was far from being an idle one. He was generally on the move, and lived most of the time under a canvas roof; when not in the field he was building huts or temporary winter-quarters. The army, or a large portion of it, was stationed so far beyond civilization that it became a military necessity that soldiers should do the work referred to.

The stockade was finished, provisions landed and stored therein, and preparations made for an advance into the Everglades. More troops were on the way, and while awaiting their arrival a Seminole Indian approached the picket-line carrying a pole with a white piece of cloth tied to it. The officer in charge took him to the commanding officer, and through an interpreter it was ascertained that the Indian had been sent by his chief, Billy Bowlegs, with a message to the effect that he and his tribe desired peace.

This was communicated to the general in command (Twiggs) at Tampa, who sent word that he would meet the chief at our camp on a certain day. The general in due time arrived on the steamboat, and about the same time Billy Bowlegs came with a number of sub-chiefs and their squaws. The general invited them to a feast on the boat, where a powwow was held and a treaty agreed to; wherein the chief promised that the Seminoles would be good Indians for all time to come, and would go to the Western Territory at the stipulated time.

Uncle Sam then withdrew his warriors, leaving a small force to build what was afterwards known as Fort Myers.

Thus ended a bloodless campaign that restored peace to the settlers of Southern Florida for a few years longer.

CHRONICLES OF CARTER BARRACKS.

COLONEL PEPPERCORN was as ready to talk about his library as a housekeeper about her cooks, but he had learned that most men are oftener indifferent or jealous than sympathetic in the matter of other people's hobbies.

In fact, the bore has elsewhere been explained to be a man who persists in describing his headache when you want to describe yours.

The visit of Colonel Longbow, therefore, was rather a pleasant incident, as that of a gentleman far enough advanced in bibliomania to be appreciative, but not so far as to be dangerous.

This point is reached when the patient falls back upon the crude morality of the Old Testament, which in truth is responsible for more rascality than could be found in a week's walk through Water Street. If a prosperous collector has anticipated me in the acquirement of an original copy of Mather's "Magnalia" or Walton's "Lives," I simply deploy against my conscience the Israelites who spoiled the Egyptians, and straightway abstract these rare editions for the use of my own poor shelves, to which they ought to belong in any fair average of distribution.

The experiments already made to test the value of books was so successful that both officers agreed to try once more, but this time Longbow was to be blindfolded and to lose even appearance as a guide to selection.

Thus rendered impartial, he found himself in possession of a volume, the middle of the left-hand page of which, when opened, was to determine whether it was worth six cents a pound in cost of transportation or no.

The search resulted in "Let them marry, in God's name, and Heaven bless them and give them joy."

"Sound advice still," cried the colonel, and Longbow admitted to himself that it was a curious echo to certain voices of the night that had of late disturbed his slumbers. But then he had managed to light upon "Don Quixote,"

and perhaps there are more fertile suggestions to the square inch in that piece of literature than any other covered by the dome of the Bodleian, even after it shall have secured all of Lord Wolseley's war criticism.

And once again the two colonels tried by lottery the worth of printers' ink, and when Peppercorn saw Longbow finally hold up a small Latin lexicon his heart failed him, and when he read from under Longbow's forefinger nothing but—"*Rhodope, es, f, probably the Rose-faced thing, a mountain range in Thrace,*" he felt that this bit of information was hardly worth six cents to the average mind.

But Colonel Longbow,—still blindfolded and silent, he stood there with more commotion in his head than Peppercorn dreamed of, as little as the lounger at the riverside knows of the disturbance away down yonder, where trout and minnows are flying before the pike. Coincidences, indeed,—it seemed almost blasphemy to apply so common a term to portents such as these.

"Well," remarked Colonel Peppercorn, "a pretty bad failure that,—but a dictionary tells more about words than fortunes, and has no special biographic value, like a monkey-wrench that fits almost any kind of a nut, but makes a mighty poor paint-brush."

Longbow attempted no reply. He felt that it would be a financial success to carry along even a lexicon at any expense, hereafter, if it could be counted upon for such seasonable aid in all emergencies.

He bid the colonel "good-night" and went up to his rooms, trying to think where he had read of "tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." Rhodope, a mountain in Thrace, indeed,—no need to go so far for rosy-faced things.

But Longbow shook his head and next day resumed his journey, having provided himself with an odd volume of "Cœlebs in search of a Wife," which he picked up in the post library, and took along to consult in the manner of the "Sortes Virgilianæ," where we leave him, hoping he will be as fortunate as the Oxonian who is said to have sought an answer to the question whether the Prince of Wales would be regent, and to have opened his Æneid at

"Sic regia tecta subibat
Horridas."

It was about this time that the adjutant, Mr. Penwiper, received a very affectionate letter from Larriker. "If," wrote the captain among other things, "if I can find a moment's release from the deviltry going on here, I will use it in begging you to sound Plussmore on the subject of a transfer. Some time ago I understood he wanted a change of air, and this is the place to get it. I have succeeded in ridding myself of thirty pounds of flesh in the last three weeks, and, should this kind of thing keep up, my boy will soon become an orphan. I have no leisure for a smoke until Basbridge goes to bed, and between check roll-calls and guard-duty every other day, I might as well be a night-blooming cereus, which I wish I was. Really, Plussmore would be happy here. Basbridge and he could make points on one another until life would grow as exciting as a chapter in Cooper. I would be glad if you would lay the attractions of this locality before him in your usual limpid manner, and oblige yours, truly,

"LARRIKER."

To all of which the shrewd adjutant promptly responded, "Do it yourself. Plussmore would resent anything like management. Tell him what you want and give no reasons."

Larriker followed this wise counsel, and then Penwiper assisted by setting forth to Plussmore in full detail the objections to his going, encouraged by which the captain seriously took the matter into consideration. He had discovered there were certain drawbacks to service at regimental head-quarters. The puddle was too big, and there were too many ducks in it. He was tired of the people and of the landscape, and of the monotonous tooting of the band. It would be refreshing to find himself in the midst of new patterns of scenery and society.

And doubtless Plussmore's experience with what he considered Miss Ethel's vagaries was kept unpleasantly alive by so much of what had been common ground to both. Here they had walked together, and there he had twined

round her hat a spray of jasmine stolen through the colonel's garden fence. Down yonder was the porch where they met for the first time, and close by was a gate where he had last seen her.

Nearly every day he had to pass the spot on which, at her request, he picked up a ribbon lost by some damsel on a holiday of flirtation and sight-seeing. This had Miss Ethel tied on the button of his coat, proclaiming him therewith to be a knight of the order of the lotus, on account, as she said, of the vivacity of his disposition, which Plussmore understood as a refined acknowledgment of his habitual suppression of himself in her society lest his ardor might give offence.

But there came a time when his eyes were opened, and he in turn tied the ribbon round a broken decanter over the empty fireplace, and was as near quoting Horace as community of sentiment and ignorance of language permitted—

> —— "me tabula sacer
> Votiva paries indicat uvida
> Suspendisse potenti
> Vestimenta maris deo,"

which is rendered by the college valedictorian into—

> "I saved one note,
> The last you wrote,
> It lies upon my shelf;
> And there, half dry,
> It shows that I
> Know how it is myself."

Not unreasonably, then, was the captain prone to detect an echo of pity in Mrs. Peppercorn's greeting, or of malign interest in the bow of Mrs. Featherfoot, or even in the polite conventionalities of Madame Truffles.

Yes, it would be pleasant to put all this behind him, and, moreover, the captain rather liked Colonel Longbow, who for his own amusement occasionally fell into Plussmore's ways, and allowed an apparent interest to tempt the captain into a full ventilation of the grievances a complete stock of which Plussmore generally kept on hand. There was always something wrong with the post adjutant, or the

post commissary, or the post surgeon, or the post treasurer, or the post commander, or at all events with the post itself, if, indeed, they were not all in a conspiracy against Plussmore's peace of mind when he had been following too constant a diet of strong coffee and lobster salad.

Mere drill had no terrors for Plussmore, as we have already mentioned. One trouble with Carter Barracks was the restriction of this amusement to three-quarters of an hour, the colonel remarking that what an officer could not teach in that interval was not worth knowing. But Plussmore liked to take plenty of time and go over the company man by man, rectifying every detail of position and movement with the patient gravity that such important matters demanded.

It took one of Plussmore's recruits nearly a year to get into the ranks, and even then he was set back into squad-drill instanter, if the captain's eagle-eye ever caught his profile a button's breadth beyond the alignment.

And Plussmore's Sunday morning inspection was a thing to behold. It was slower than the building of the Mississippi delta. In comparison, verily do the mills of the gods grind with lightning-like velocity. At last the colonel established a "recall," after which, as he expressed it, Plussmore must pocket his microscope.

Neither could check roll-calls fail to furnish to Plussmore a sort of subtile satisfaction enjoyed by lazier men than he, —that of making everybody else uncomfortable, which is the last relish abandoned by the sinner in the process of regeneration, and, worse than that, enters largely into the value of those seats in the celestial dress-circle which command a view of the pit.

Basbridge might abound in such ways and means,—if not mean ways,—which characterize ordinary specimens of "a thorough soldier," but Plussmore rather welcomed the prospect of encountering him on his native heath. It would make life exciting, and was infinitely better than the lonesome business of trying to educate regimental headquarters up to their responsibilities. There is nothing men know so much of as every duty except the one waiting at their own door.

Moreover, to the captain's apprehension there was actual

hostility in the air of Carter Barracks. Neither in love nor tactics had he been duly appreciated, and the relations between him and Captains Boomer and Truffles were getting somewhat strained.

A lot of recruits recently received at the post were to be divided up by the former and Plussmore, who was not a man of expedients, but had the utmost confidence in his own judgment.

He would walk round a horse with great deliberation, investigate each extremity with concentrated care, study the animal fore and aft and amidships with judicial severity, and then announce his character, point by point, with all the preciseness of a criminal indictment.

As for a recruit, one look at face and figure was enough to satisfy Plussmore whether the man had in him the stuff for a corporal or a snowbird.

Boomer, however, with his usual modesty, made no claim to inspiration either as a jockey or judge of men. He preferred a week in the stable or a day's fatigue duty. And in the matter of these recruits he had fortified himself by a close inspection of the muster-roll, and could have given the history of every name on it with greater accuracy than the clerk who made it out.

Each captain had alternate choice, and Plussmore's first selection was a very tall, straight, broad-chested fellow with mutton-chop whiskers and florid complexion, of whom hereafter. When the ceremony was finished, Boomer by a strange coincidence was found in the possession of the only clerk, carpenter, and tailor on the list, while his other men were reported as, by occupation, student, apothecary, musician, and engineer.

Of Plussmore's selections two were in the guard-house before night, two deserted the next day, one soon afterwards went into the hospital, and one immediately began to develop a capacity for rations and repose that convinced the sergeant, who was addicted to Dickens, that he had to do with the *Fat Boy* done over and enlarged.

But "mutton-chops" remained, a thing of beauty and of joy forever. Plussmore particularly recommended him to the sergeant as a most promising subject, but that veteran preserved a grim silence.

In the course of the week the captain noticed with painful astonishment on the morning report, "recruit Clifford to confinement——"

"What's this, sergeant? what's the matter with Clifford?"

"Drunk, sir."

"Release him."

"Yes, sir."

Purely a military dialogue, but the sergeant's face, which Plussmore declined to look at, was as voluminous as the pages of Gibbon.

A few more days passed, and the sergeant one afternoon came over to the captain, and with a particularly formal salute reported recruit Clifford as too drunk for drill, and requested further instructions.

"Have you seen him yourself, sergeant?"

"Yes, sir."

"There is no doubt as to his condition?"

"Dead drunk, sir."

"Where is he?"

"Had him put in bed, sir."

"Let him sleep it off, and then bring him to me."

"Yes, sir."

By this time Plussmore was angry, and the longer he waited the madder he grew. In the course of the evening there was a knock at his door, and the sergeant announced that he had Clifford outside.

"Send him in."

Plussmore rose up from his chair, and waited with a volley of reprimands fairly aching to get beyond his teeth. He failed to notice that the sergeant, after a moment's pause in the hall, had gone outside. It was quite a while before he returned, and the captain spent the interval in endeavoring to eliminate a crowd of swear-words from the terse remarks in which he proposed to set forth the enormity of Mr. Clifford's conduct. He intended to be peremptory, but not profane,—if he could help it.

Finally the sergeant appeared. "Can't find him, sir; left him in the hall; must have gone as soon as my back was turned."

"Very well, sergeant; hunt him up and confine him."

Plussmore, finding his room intolerably hot and close,

which would never have been detected by the thermometer, went out for a walk, and did not pull up until he had reached the cove, fully three miles from the post.

In the morning the sergeant reported that Clifford had put in an appearance at tattoo roll-call, and stated that his flight was rendered necessary by mutinous conduct in the department of the interior, which left him no time for ceremony. The sergeant, rather disposed to credit the statement, had endeavored to find the captain, and failing in that, had allowed Clifford to remain in quarters. "What were the captain's orders?"

"Well, sergeant, let him go. I have been disposed to give him every chance. What kind of a man is he?"

"Bad lot, sir."

"Why, sergeant, he don't look like it."

"Them's the worst sort, sir."

The sergeant had no theories on the subject, but was in his third enlistment, and meantime had handled a good many men. He knew that a nickel-plated trunk is not necessarily a cash-box, or, as he was not much given to beard, he had saved his pride and generalized his observations into the opinion that it takes something more than a moustache to make a soldier.

It was hard to part Plussmore and his ideals. For several days he had been almost afraid to look over the morning report, lest he should encounter Clifford's name, and he really began to hope that the trouble was the result only of recent change and new surroundings.

Growing familiar with his duties and encouraged by judicious management, this recruit would be sure to fulfil the rare promise of his exterior, and in the course of events would surely justify Plussmore's foresight and patience by ultimately becoming "a good first sergeant," and the captain would then be enabled to point to him with pride and say, "You see that man? Well, I picked him out and brought him up, and there he is, the best non-commissioned officer in the regiment."

The very next Sunday afternoon Plussmore came face to face with his gay recruit, making the best of his way home and occupying the lion's share of the road in doing so.

The fellow braced up and endeavored to compass a salute,

but only succeeded in knocking off his cap. He made no effort just then to pick it up, recognizing with a politic (al) general's wisdom that he must reorganize and resupply. Finding the Chickahominy untenable, he changed base to the James River, or actually fell back against the fence, by the kind support of which he was enabled to straighten himself out, and began gazing at his cap with an air of profound calculation. At last he slowly stretched out his hand in its direction, and was very much surprised apparently to find it still so far away. He tried to investigate the ends of his fingers, as though they were to blame, and the situation having now become too complicated for further effort, he sank gradually to the ground and went to sleep.

Plussmore left him there. His disgust was so intense that he almost hoped the man, if let alone, would die and be done with it. The next day, passing down the walk, he saw Clifford on the other side, looking as straight and trim as a larch and as virtuous as the ten commandments. "Come here, sir, come here," shouted Plussmore, actually crossing half the street in his passion; "come here immediately."

There was no need of so much insistence, for Clifford stopped at once, came over, and, halting in front of Plussmore, gracefully saluted him. The captain took no notice of it, but shaking his finger at the impassive soldier, went on, "You know what you are, sir; you know what you are?"

As there was no reply, Plussmore continued,—"I'll tell you what you are,—a dead beat, sir, *a dead beat*, A DEAD BEAT. Now, do you know what that means?"

"No, sir," replied the man, with a deferential shake of the head,—"no, sir, I do not, er—er—I have never been in the habit of associating with people who used such language."

After all, Plussmore was a pretty square kind of a man, for it must be confessed that recruit Clifford, at this stage of the proceedings, like Stonewall Jackson at Port Republic, stood triumphant, with the enemy flung off from all sides of him.

But the counterstroke of the ordinary officer would have been the guard-house. Plussmore rose superior to the temptation, keeping in mind that the man had done nothing

but answer a question, and was hardly amenable to the articles of war for that, even though his reply was more conclusive than had been expected.

"Go to your quarters," said the captain, and with another esthetic salute Clifford departed.

Of course, Plussmore could not get this performance out of his mind, and the more he reflected upon it the less comfortable he felt. The crushing reproof that he intended to administer had come back like a boomerang, and it did seem as though an old company commander ought to have left the field in a little better order, with colors ragged, perhaps, but yet full high advanced. While the captain was thus perplexing himself with the many possibilities of apt rejoinder that in these cases never get to the front until the battle is over, Mrs. Truffles passed by and bestowed her usual pleasant bow and smile upon the preoccupied Plussmore.

He neither heard nor saw her, as little conscious of her gracious greeting as Bonaparte of

"The cannon's loud roar and the musketry's rattle,"

when the jailer of St. Helena had finished the delegated job of the frightened European cabinets.

"Well, I like that," was the comment of the madame, when she found that her neighbor absolutely ignored her presence. "What's the matter with the man?"

Naturally she went and told her husband, who started after the offender with the biggest stick in his collection.

Not by any manner of means. Mrs. Truffles was not constructed on that type. In the large majority of cases she was confident she could hoe her own row, and in this particular instance never once thought of invoking the aid of Captain Truffles, who was a little hasty and quite able to mix things, if rashly started to work.

She continued on her way to call upon Mrs. Traum, whose sister had just arrived, and when the three ladies foregathered they were all as sweet as bees on a clover-blossom, and nobody would have dreamed that so near the surface of these sparkling amenities lay the dark resolve of Madame Truffles to discipline the surly Plussmore.

And she did not have long to wait. The captain was too restless to be content with the seclusion of his quarters. He acknowledged that his recent failure bordered on the ignominious, in view of the things that he might have said, and had already composed a scathing allusion to Clifford's performance in the fence-corner, where he had abandoned the hunt for his cap and slept off his liquor.

The captain was fairly in hopes he might run across the fellow again, and began to pace back and forth in front of his quarters. Suddenly Mrs. Boomer appeared, and hailed him in such cheery fashion that the world grew brighter, a good deal brighter, and Plussmore doffed his cap with more than usual elegance and felt proud of his success, and finally determined to go a-fishing.

He changed his clothes and passed down the yard. There, just turning the corner, was Mrs. Truffles. Again the captain pulled himself together for a bow and accompaniments that he proposed should be as perfect as any ever executed by the first gentleman in England or the greatest orator in America.

These things always turn out best when least studied.

To begin with, Plussmore forgot he had exchanged his forage-cap for a slouch-hat, and became demoralized with the flexible brim, at which he pulled like a dentist, but it was of no use. Madame Truffles sailed along, not precisely in maiden meditation fancy free, but with an Arctic stare that would have made an ice-pick shiver.

"Aha," muttered the lady; "my debts are paid and there is a balance in the bank."

It was Plussmore's nature to finish every job he undertook, and he was still tugging at his hat, when the madame disappeared behind the rose-bushes of his neighbor. A big cloud seemed to have come over the sun, and cold winds blew out of the east. The captain concluded to stay in-doors, and, feeling in need of a tonic, took—a couple of quinine pills. Here was more material for thought, and the captain decided that the madame had become prejudiced by some misrepresentations of old Truffles, who, it just now occurred to Plussmore, had been noticeably formal for a fortnight.

Therefore, the next time they met Plussmore reduced his

recognition to so nearly a negative quantity that Captain Truffles, always dignified and often rheumatic, thought himself warranted in finding occupation for his eyes in the opposite direction, so far as the cervical muscles permitted, whenever Plussmore obstructed the view. In time, by successive increments on each side, it would have developed into a very pretty quarrel; but from a remark or two of the captain's, Mrs. Truffles's attention was called to this probability, and, being a very sensible woman, as ready to take the initiative in conciliation as in hostilities, she determined to prevent the growth of this hatchet into an axe. Anger is lazy, and not much harm is done when it comes and goes like a mushroom. It is in cases of slow combustion only, where the flame smoulders like a coal-pit, that the devil gets time to join the mess.

Meanwhile, Plussmore had received a note from Larriker, in which that gentleman set forth in glowing terms the attractions of Fort Saco for a man who was fond of sport. If Larriker correctly reported, the brooks and woods were in their primeval condition so far as fish, fur, and feathers were concerned.

"To him who in love of nature holds communion with her visible forms, she speaks a various language," and according to Larriker all the dialects, moods, and tenses existed at Fort Saco to an extent unknown even to Lindley Murray.

This was skilfully managed and touched Plussmore on a tender point, for he was wont of a Sunday afternoon to stand bareheaded under the pines and say, "The groves were God's first temples," by way of excuse for not going to church.

And then Plussmore had little occasion at Carter Barracks for perhaps the most perfect sporting equipment that ever was known, that of Roanoke Brierwood not excepted, whose pipes, poles, and guns were the envy of the regiment.

When Plussmore descended upon the scene in complete panoply, corduroys and high boots, a coat studded with pockets like the holes in a militia target, a hat encircled with hair-lines and fish-hooks for anything from perch to pickerel, belt and box for ammunition, pouch and bag for

game, a flask for—himself and another for snakes—well—unfortunately the outfit and the income were inversely related, but everybody knows that in hunting, as in the pursuit of truth generally, the pleasure is in the process and not in the proceeds.

After one or two days' further consideration, Plussmore sat down and wrote Larriker that he had no objections to the transfer that officer desired.

For a move gave Plussmore no anxiety. Between a bonfire and the auctioneer it enabled him to clear the decks and get rid of a great deal of accumulated rubbish, and he rather welcomed this obliteration of the past. So he began to sort his luggage into minuend and remainder, the former to be the nucleus of a fresh formation at Fort Saco, the latter devoted to friends or the fireplace.

Probably it is the bump of acquisitiveness that attaches people to whatever has been sanctified by their use, so that to abandon a dress or destroy an old letter seems a crime. In the case of Plussmore, so to speak, this bump was a cavity. In proportion as he grew accustomed to things they became disagreeable. His beard, for instance, underwent all possible transformations, from fringes on the cheek-bone to a solitary tuft under the chin. Sometimes it was an imperial only and sometimes the demnition total, or in Boomer's phrase it varied through a *pousse-café* to full bill of fare. And from great emergencies his face shone out smooth as an egg. In the midst of all this Plussmore was one day returning from town, when he encountered Mrs. Truffles just coming out of Deckerton's, a place that combined the advantages of post-office, library, and dry-goods on the village corner nearest the post.

He fell to freezing-point at once, but to his astonishment that vivacious lady called out, "Oh,—Captain Plussmore, I'm delighted to see you for two reasons; this bundle is one of them, and if you will be good enough to take it, I'll tell you the other."

The onslaught was as decisive as Kellerman's charge at Marengo, and Captain Plussmore promptly tucked the bundle under his arm and began the composition of a stately sentence, to the effect that he never considered himself really happy, unless "he was—er—er——"

"Carrying my bundles, of course. Well, Captain Plussmore, that is very nice of you. I expect a very charming young lady next week—Monday, if nothing happens; she thinks of going from here to those people at Fort Charles, and I wish her to fully realize the superior attractions of Carter Barracks. Captain Truffles and myself would be glad to have you lunch with us Wednesday."

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